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The Painter
By Himself.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

P. R. A.

BY

WILLIAM B. BOULTON

WITH FORTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THERE is no lack of material for a work dealing with the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, indeed, the painter's industry, his methodical habits, his early professional success, and his distinguished social position, have together resulted in so complete a record of his life and doings that the main difficulty which besets a biographer is that of selection.

The chief authorities for Reynolds's professional life are his own notebooks, books of account and lists of sitters, his Discourses, and the numerous catalogues of his exhibited work. His personal history is best followed in the letters, diaries, and memoirs of his contemporaries. Works like Dr. Birkbeck Hill's *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, with its wealth of annotation; Cunningham's *Letters of Horace Walpole;* the *Autobiography of Mrs. Piozzi* and the later editions of Fanny Burney's *Diary and Letters*, are all of great value in this respect.

Of the published Lives, that of James Northcote, which appeared in 1818, has a peculiar value as having been written by a pupil and assistant of the artist. The shorter Life by Joseph Farington, R.A., published in 1819, has also great merit within narrower limits; Malone's *Life and Writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds* and Mason's *Observations* are useful, and Hazlitt's *Conversations of James Northcote*, and the less well-known *Conversations of James Northcote, R.A., with James Ward, R.A.*, preserve much valuable contemporary information about the artist. Later

came Mr. W. Cotton's *Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Works*, 1856, and *Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes and Observations on Pictures*, 1859, which were the work of an enthusiast, and added much to our knowledge. All these sources, together with much information derived from family papers and the official records of the Royal Academy, were drawn upon in the production of the admirable *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, begun by C. R. Leslie, R.A., and completed by Tom Taylor, M.A., which was published by Mr. Murray in 1865.

The author of the present volume has relied upon all these authorities, as well as upon other elaborate publications which have appeared since, and deal chiefly with the identification of Reynolds's portraits and with the lives of his sitters. The chief of these are *British Mezzotinto Portraits Described*, by J. Challoner Smith; *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Engraved Works of Joshua Reynolds*, by E. Hamilton; and the privately published *History of the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* by Messrs. A. Graves and W. V. Cronin. The last contains a valuable contribution by Sir E. R. Pearce Edgecumbe, to which the author is much indebted for many new particulars of the painter's family. The most notable critical work upon Reynolds since the publication of Leslie and Taylor's Life is Sir Walter Armstrong's finely illustrated quarto, *Sir Joshua Reynolds*, which appeared in 1890.

WILLIAM B. BOULTON.

LONDON, *July*, 1905.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

CHAPTER I

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND BOYHOOD

1723–1746

"1723, July 16, Thursday, about 1/2 an hour after 9 in the morning, I Joshua Reynolds was born. Godfathers, Uncle Joshua, (Mr. Aldwyn, proxy), Mr. Joie. Godmother, Aunt Reynolds of Exeter, (Mrs. Darby, proxy)."

His own entrance into the world is thus recorded by Joshua Reynolds on a page of a commonplace book, the gift of his father, in which, as a youth, he entered other interesting particulars of his family. This initial entry illustrates very happily the completeness of our knowledge of Reynolds's career. His own methodical habits, his early eminence in his profession, his untiring industry, and the notable character of his friends and sitters, together enable us to follow him almost daily throughout his sixty-nine years. During the greater part of his professional career, he kept a series of pocket memorandum books in which minute details of his life were recorded; and in one or other of these, or in the intimate letters and diaries of his contemporaries, which have been printed at intervals since his death, may be found particulars of Reynolds's life and conversation, almost as

complete as those in which he records his birth. There are relatively few men of whom so much can be said, fewer still, we believe, whose life will bear so well so searching a scrutiny.

Joshua Reynolds was the third son of the Rev. Samuel Reynolds, of Plympton, Devon, and of Theophila, his wife, and at the time of his birth his family had been settled in that county for three generations at least. The first Reynolds of whom we have record was the great-grandfather of young Joshua—another Joshua, who was born in 1609, and lies buried at St. Thomas's, Exeter. He had a son, John, who was prebend of Exeter, and died in 1692. John had three sons, John, Joshua, and Samuel, whose careers establish very clearly a scholastic and clerical tradition for the family.

John was a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and Fellow of Eton, and wrote a learned work on the census taken before the birth of Christ. He published also an edition of Pomponius Mela, which was a text-book at the Eton of his day, and was embellished with twenty-seven maps from plates engraved at the expense of the author's friends, Fellows of colleges, Devonshire gentry, and the like. John apparently made a modest fortune, for he endowed six exhibitions at Exeter College. Joshua was Bursar of Corpus Christi, Oxford. Samuel Reynolds, the father of young Joshua, was a Scholar of Corpus, and a Fellow of Baliol. He was a close friend of Edward Young of the "Night Thoughts," who wrote the following letter to him on the death of his father :—

"DEAR SAM,

"Yesterday morning I lost (pardon if grief and confusion want address) the best of fathers. My affliction is so great I know not yett how to wrestle with it. My greatest relief is making my complaint to my friends, and

pleasing myself with the thought that they will condole with me, if they really are so. I would but can no more.

"Your afflicted humble servant,

"E. YOUNG.

"12th Aug. 1705."

If we turn to the connections of young Joshua's mother, we shall see the intellectual character of the Reynolds family reinforced by her marriage with Samuel in 1711. This lady was Theophila Potter, daughter of the Rev. Matthew Potter, perpetual curate of Great Torrington, who came of a race of squires settled at Iddesleigh, in Devon. Her mother was a Miss Theophila Baker, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Baker, Rector of Bishops Nymmett, South Molton. The Bakers had long been notable squires at Ilton, in Somersetshire, and Thomas Baker was a man of much mathematical ability, who held the Royal Society's medal for a treatise in that science. The family included also a bishop, William Baker, who filled successively the sees of Bangor and Norwich, and was a cousin of the rector of Bishops Nymmett.

Theophila Baker, who became enamoured of Matthew Potter, the perpetual curate, married him without the rector's consent, and in so doing incurred the righteous anger of that divine, who never forgave her. Poor Potter died a few years after his marriage, and left Theophila with a son and two daughters, and with a grief which urged the poor lady to cry herself blind and to follow him to the grave. Her daughter, Theophila, was twenty-three when she married Samuel Reynolds, Reynolds being thirty. Mrs. Reynolds was a shrewd woman, according to all accounts, which, however, are scanty, and are confined to a few incidental remarks read and recorded by careful biographers of her son.

Although the affairs of the three generations of Reynoldses which preceded young Joshua disclose no very great prosperity, and though they had perhaps reached their lowest ebb in the hands of Samuel Reynolds, his father, it is clear that the boy was of gentle birth, and that all his instincts were likely to be those of a gentleman. Several of his biographers have expressed a rather ingenuous wonder at the social success which attended him throughout his career, and that at a time when different ranks were more sharply divided than at present. But there was surely nothing in his birth and parentage to make a bar to such connections, and if we add to his respectable origin other qualities which he undoubtedly possessed, a mind of a natural refinement, a placid temper, and an unfailing good nature which led him invariably to respect the feelings of others, there seems little to explain in the undoubted fact that he became the honoured friend and associate of the best men and women of his time.

Four years after his marriage, and eight before Joshua was born, Samuel Reynolds came to Plympton, and "begun the school on July 13, 1715," as his son records. This school, it would seem, was one of the small endowed Grammar Schools, and carried with it a stipend of £120 a year and a house. With this income he and Theophila contrived to rear a quiverful. There were eleven children born to the pair altogether, reduced by death to six during Samuel's lifetime.

There are many quaint particulars of the additions and subtractions to and from that family to be gleaned from Joshua's pious record. In the ten years before Joshua himself appeared, Humphrey, Robert, Molly, Ann, Jenny, and Betty came to fill the family nest; afterwards came Theophila, Samuel, Frances, and Martyn. Poor Ann died in 1720; another fledgling disappeared

from the nest when Offy was dropped from the window by a careless nurse six years later, and three others died in their infancy. We imagine Joshua was himself in much danger when, in March of 1735, he was seized with the small-pox. "Munday, the 6th day of the distemper, nothing amiss in my Regimen hitherto," we read. "I had a blister at 4 this morning. Tuesday the 7th day, perhaps the 8th, seems to have been the worst day; then most outragious." On the ninth day, "being hungry," he had broth at night, "tho' contrary to Mr. Ruport's express order." On the tenth day, having slept well, he was "brave;" and so on, till the seventeenth, when the artless chronicle concludes with the information, "Betty first seized with the Small Pox."

Samuel Reynolds is presented to us as a scholar guileless as a child, and as ignorant of the world. The family tradition preserves his reputation for simplicity and absent-mindedness, and some harmless stories of him have survived, in which that character is perfectly displayed. He would give away his last half-guinea to "Bamfylde Moore Carew, King of the Gypsies," for example, and was known to have dropped one of a pair of gambados, when he was riding, without missing it. A gambado was a long legging or boot, fixed to the saddle, and opening down the side for the admission of the leg, so Samuel Reynolds's abstraction strikes one as fairly complete. Northcote tells us that, to avoid superfluous words with his wife Theophila, he composed a doggrel upon her name—

> "When I say The,
> You must make tea;
> When I say Offy,
> You must make coffee,"—

a poetical effort which has caused much merriment to superior spirits like Allan Cunningham. For the rest,

Samuel was a dreamy, amiable character apparently, devoted to his books and given to study in many sciences. He dipped into medicine and anatomy, and would produce skulls to illustrate his researches at the lectures which he gave to his children on those subjects. He was much addicted, also, to the casting of horoscopes, and would spend nights on the top of the old castle at Plympton in that engrossing occupation.

It was under such influences, then, and in such surroundings that young Reynolds spent his childhood and youth; and he received all the learning he ever acquired at his father's school. The old building, much transformed, may still be seen at Plympton, with its colonnade supporting the schoolroom, and its air of antique solidity. Some doubts as to the quality of this education have been expressed by some of his biographers—doubts founded upon the shakiness of Reynolds's spelling throughout his life. But the inference they draw seems hardly justified, for men otherwise accomplished often fail to acquire even the elements of correct orthography, and, as we shall see later, Reynolds was certainly a man of fair education. He wrote "Idlers" for Doctor Johnson, and if his "Discourses" are not always models of clearness, they are quite up to the average of the productions of contemporaries who were not professed men of letters. Reynolds certainly also acquired at least a modicum of Latin at Plympton. Among relics of the painter yet in the possession of the Gwatkin family is his school Ovid, well thumbed, and annotated with mythological as well as etymological observations. In later years, too, it was to Reynolds that Johnson first handed the Latin epitaph to the memory of Goldsmith for his opinion. The Doctor was not wont to pay empty compliments, as we know, and we may be certain he was pretty well assured of Reynolds's competence to read the epitaph before

sending it to him. It is just as certain that Reynolds's occupations in after-life left no time for the acquisition of the classics, and we may take the groundwork of the Latin tongue laid by his father at Plympton Grammar School as a measure of the general education he received at the same hands.

There is evidence that the boy early showed leanings towards the profession which he afterwards adopted, and that he soon began to sweeten his labours in the classics by the exercise of the graphic arts. The boy was set a Latin exercise, "De Labore," by his father, and embellished the back of the essay with a drawing in perspective of a wall perforated by a window. The good old schoolmaster took the trouble to endorse the exercise with a remark of his own, "This is drawn by Joshua in school out of pure idleness," and a facsimile of the drawing may be seen in Mr. Cotton's "Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Works." But the old man relented somewhat when, at eight years of age, Joshua produced a very convincing drawing of the schoolhouse supported on pillars, and set out very correctly in perspective. The child had become possessed of the Jesuit's Treatise on that subject, and the drawing was the result of his correct grasp of its principles, and of their proper application. "Now, this," wrote his father, "exemplifies what the author of the 'Perspective' asserts in his preface, that, by observing the rules laid down in his book, a man may do wonders; for this is wonderful."

There was, perhaps, some artistic strain in the Reynolds blood, for most of his brothers and sisters were fond of drawing, and it is recorded that Joshua's early efforts were the poorest of them all, and that he was nicknamed the Clown in consequence. Pencils and paper were luxuries in that modest household, and, in the absence of those necessary materials, the children were allowed to

cover the walls of a long passage in the house with their sketches, executed with "burnt sticks," according to a family tradition founded upon the authority of Joshua's sister Elizabeth. Those early efforts have long since disappeared, but they seem to have been remembered in 1818, when Mr. Leslie made a pilgrimage to Plympton, and learnt from Mr. Philips, the occupant of the old schoolhouse, that, not many years before, some "paintings" on the walls of the passage had been whitewashed over. He learnt, also, that Joshua had left his signature scratched on the great window of the schoolroom with a diamond, but that in later days some predatory master of the school had removed the pane. The same tradition reports that Mrs. Parker, the wife of the squire at Saltram near Plymouth, an intimate friend of Mrs. Reynolds, and mother of the first Lord Boringdon, presented Joshua with his first pencil. When we remember the fine pictures of various members of that family now at Saltram, which were the product of Reynolds's mature pencil, that early gift is not without interest.

It is not easy to trace the progress of the young artist during those early days, but James Northcote, whom we shall see later as Reynolds's pupil, as his friend, and his faithful biographer, describes the boy's fondness for drawing, and his diligence in copying whatever of graphic art fell in his way. Among his father's books he found such works as Dryden's edition of Plutarch, with its engraved portraits, and Jacob Cats's "Book of Emblems." This last delighted the child, and so fascinated his youthful imagination with its weird subjects, that the impression they made upon his mind was never removed. Curious critics still trace in his relatively few excursions into the weird and terrible the influence of the designs from Jacob Cats. A shepherd consulting a witch in a cave suggested part of the treatment of his rendering of the Witches' scene in

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Macbeth; and when he came to paint Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra, that lady's attitude and surroundings owed much to his early impressions from the same source, as we are assured.

Cotton records having seen one or two other youthful productions of the boy—"the interior of a bookroom or library, apparently copied from a small engraving with all the minuteness and delicacy of Callot and Della Bella," and "a drawing of a fish, also done with a pen and inscribed with the same minute upright character, apparently his father's handwriting, 'copied from nature.'" Both these drawings are in Lady Colomb's collection. Haydon and Wilkie, too, made a tour to Plymouth in 1809; the latter says in his autobiography, "We visited Sir Joshua's birthplace, and saw in his bedroom an early attempt at a portrait drawn with his finger dipped in ink. It had all the character of his later works."

There is in the possession of the Earl of St. Germans, at Port Eliot, a canvas which we may regard with the greatest confidence as young Reynolds's first essay in oils. Among other great advantages which the boy owed to the respectability of his rearing, was the countenance of many of the chief families of his neighbourhood. Among these were the Edgcumbes, the owners of that stately house which looks down upon Plymouth Sound. The son of that house, afterwards the second Lord, but better known later as a blood at White's, Dick Edgcumbe, the friend of Horace Walpole and George Selwyn, and a favourite with old King George the Second, was a boy of Reynolds's own age, and the two often ranged the woods of Mount Edgcumbe together after birds' nests, and joined in other boyish diversions. Dick Edgcumbe's education was entrusted to the chaplain of the family, the Rev. Thomas Smart, who officiated at the church at Maker, above Cremyll Beach. Tradition says that the divine

was often the butt of Dick, who was noted as a humorist, and that the latter suggested to Reynolds, who was not twelve at the time, the idea of caricaturing the parson. The boys both attended Smart's church, where young Joshua made a surreptitious sketch of him on his thumb-nail. After service the boys ran together down to Cremyll Beach, to the boathouse, where Reynolds provided himself with the paints and brushes commonly used by watermen upon their vessels, and the canvas of an old sail, and with such unpromising material produced the portrait of Mr. Smart. It is described by those who have seen it as roughly painted on rough canvas, "but it is not without character and a certain broad cleverness."

Cotton mentions another early effort of Reynolds which may rank in date with the portrait of Parson Smart, "a portrait of Lord Edgcumbe painted by Sir Joshua when he was an untaught boy at Plympton, and before he went to London. The background, with a man of war in it, was so ill done that it was painted over by Richard, Lord Edgcumbe, who was himself an artist."

It was by such efforts as this that the boy gratified his taste for draughtsmanship, and gradually attained a reputation as a budding artist among the local connoisseurs. It would seem that his early love for perspective still inspired the greater part of his artistic activity during the four or five years in which he passed from childhood to youth, for when the time came for him to choose a profession, his father placed so much on record, adding that Joshua had little to do with colour, but had drawn in chalk and charcoal. "His pictures strike off wonderfully," we are told, "if they be looked on with a due regard to the point of sight and the point of distance."

Joshua's promise of artistic ability had naturally its due weight in 1740, when he was "drawing near seventeen," and the inevitable choice of a profession was forcing

itself upon his father and himself. There are letters preserved in the family in which we see the good man taking counsel with his friends upon that momentous question. Chief among these was Mr. Craunch, a gentleman with a small fortune living at Plympton, and a Mr. Cutcliffe, an attorney at Bideford. Craunch, in a modest way, was the good genius of young Reynolds; he was evidently interested in the boy from the first, and, as we learn from Samuel in 1740, he had already asked the old man what "he designed to do with Joshua." It may have been Craunch, as Tom Taylor opines, who first predicted the future eminence of the young painter; it is certain that some years later he assisted materially in the fulfilment of that prophecy by lending money to young Reynolds to enable him to visit Italy. Reynolds in after-life was full of gratitude to his kindly neighbour. He brought from Italy a set of four landscapes as a present, and later intended a handsome silver cup for his benefactor, which, however, Mr. Craunch's death prevented him from receiving. That slight incident, by the way, and the manner in which it is treated by one of his biographers, Allan Cunningham, is a very good index of the value of that writer's life of Reynolds. "The painter," says the amiable Cunningham, "had the honour of the intention and the use of the cup —a twofold advantage of which he was not insensible."

From a series of letters addressed to Mr. Cutcliffe in the spring of that year, 1740, we learn that both Samuel Reynolds and his son were divided between the professions of apothecary and painter. The first seemed to present itself to the father as the natural crown of his own instruction of the boy in some of its mysteries; the last was an obviously suitable occupation for a lad whose performances as a draughtsman had already attracted the attention of the neighbourhood. Samuel was, at the moment, intending to approach the local practitioner, Mr. Ruport of

Plympton, with a view of binding Joshua to medicine, and, failing him, his wife's kinsman, a gentleman in the same profession at Bideford, when one Mr. Warmell, who was "both a painter and a player, having lately seen but his first performances, said, if he had his hands full of business, he would rather take Joshua for nothing (that is as an apprentice) than another with £50." This was a guarded but, no doubt, valuable opinion, and it certainly helped the pair in deciding in favour of painting. Joshua, on being consulted, evidently leaned towards art, but "would rather be an apothecary than an ordinary painter, but, if he could be bound to an eminent master, he should choose the latter."

The good Mr. Craunch, at this juncture, bethought him of a way of getting at the most eminent of all masters in the opinion of that day. He told Samuel that "Mr. Hudson (who is Mr. Richardson's son-in-law) used to be down at Bideford, and would be so, he believed, within these two months." He recommended Samuel to write to Cutcliffe, and invoke his aid in approaching the great man, with a view to inducing him to meet young Joshua, who would submit some of his drawings at Bideford, and, if found worthy, might enter that gentleman's household as apprentice.

Any one who has seen much of the private collections of England will be familiar with the work of Mr. Hudson, whose cold, dry portraits help to fill so many of the rooms in country houses with effigies of the owners between the period of Lely and Kneller, and that of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney. Nothing could better display the lamentable lack of taste in England during the first half of the eighteenth century than the want of wit among its leading men and women which gave lucrative employment to a painter like Hudson, and left another like Hogarth to scratch copper plates for his bread. It is

claimed for Hudson that his heads are fair likenesses, and that he painted solidly and simply. But there is no spark of animation in the presentation of his subjects. The men are inanimate and wooden, the women smothered in brocades, breast-knots, and ruffles. England, which had employed since Tudor times such men as Holbein, Rubens, and Vandyke upon its portraits, had declined later upon others like Lely and Kneller. Those painters had been succeeded in favour by Richardson, Jervas and Thornhill, and Hudson himself, for whom it may at least be said that he was the best of the lot.

Hudson, as Farington tells us, really carried on a business which was conducted on the commercial principles of a manufactory. He had the faculty of producing a plausible likeness, and was accustomed to leave his pictures at that point to his drapery man, Van Haaken, who took it up at the shoulders and completed the rest. "No time was lost by Hudson in the study of character, or in the search for variety in the position. A few formal attitudes served as models for all his subjects, and the display of arms and hands, being the most difficult parts, was managed with great economy by all the contrivances of concealment." Mr. Hudson was in great distress when fate removed Van Haaken from his useful labours, and he found himself exposed to the danger of an accumulating collection of heads all wanting bodies and limbs. He was happily, however, enabled to find another understudy in the person of Mr. Roth, who continued Van Haaken's office with great ability. Hogarth did not omit to notice the debt which Hudson and other portrait painters owed to Van Haaken. He published an etching of that artist's funeral, with Hudson and the rest of the band as chief mourners. Hudson, however, was in great vogue in 1740, and Joshua, who had seen a print from one of his portraits with which he was much pleased,

expressed himself quite willing to be bound to such a man.

From subsequent letters of Samuel Reynolds to Mr. Cutcliffe, we find that it all fell out as arranged. Joshua, in October, made the journey to Bideford, submitted his drawings, and found favour in the eyes of the great man, for we read of his arriving in London on the thirteenth of that month, and duly attending at Hudson's house, 55, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn. He found that gentleman absent at the Bath, but went over to his uncle, the Fellow of Eton, who had rooms in the Temple. Here he waited until the return of Hudson, to whom he was duly bound for four years, at a premium of £120. Of this sum his father found the half, and Joshua's married sister, Mrs. Johnson, at Torrington, the remaining £60.

Old Mr. Reynolds seems to have been overjoyed at this settlement of his son, and was full of gratitude to Mr. Cutcliffe for the trouble he had taken in the matter. "When it is ended, I shall tell you you have ended one of the most important affairs of my life, that which I have looked upon to be my main interest, some way or another, to bring about," he wrote to Cutcliffe. He thought also that if Mr. Treby, the local great man, had had a large family, "an apprenticeship under such a master would not have been below one of his sons. You have done me a favour fit for a man of a thousand a year." Joshua's conduct, too, was all that he could wish. "He has behaved himself mighty well in this affair, and done his duty on his part, which gives me much more concern in his behalf than I should otherwise have had."

At first all went very well with the young painter in London. There was little to distract men from their work in London in 1740. Under the wise rule of the sagacious Walpole, who was the first to discover the genius of the Englishman for managing his own affairs,

the country was laying up those reserves of strength which enabled it to survive the stormy times which were to come later. Mr. Hudson and his apprentice, engaged in the placid occupation of the manufacture of portraits in Great Queen Street, are quite typical figures of a time when a nation of busy men, protected at their avocations by Walpole and the Queen, were enabled by their industrial instincts and activities to lay the foundations of the modern England which we know.

At first Joshua enjoyed himself hugely. "Joshua is very sensible of his happiness in being under such a master, in such a family, and in such an employment," writes his father to Mr. Cutcliffe again in 1742; "as for Joshua, nobody, by his letters to me, was ever better pleased in his employment, in his master, in everything. 'While I am doing this, I am the happiest creature alive,' is his expression." Mr. Hudson, too, was fully satisfied with his pupil, as we gather from another letter written by old Mr. Reynolds in the previous year.

There is no very clear account of the exact employment young Reynolds was put to, but we may suppose that he assisted the eminent Van Haaken in the draperies of Mr. Hudson's portraits. Northcote says that, on his master's recommendation, he made copies of drawings by Guercino, and that the copies were so good as to be scarcely distinguishable from the originals. Northcote, indeed, more than hints that some of them found their way "into the cabinets of the curious" as the real article. We hear, in 1742, that "Dr. Huxham, who saw a Laocoon, a drawing of his, said that he who drew that would be the first hand in England." His drawings were sent down to Plympton, and were naturally much admired by his friends. Mr. Warmell was good enough to say, after looking at two or three of them, that "none of Mr. Treby's rooms had furniture equal to this, and that they all

deserved frames and glasses." Mr. Tucker, also the painter of Plymouth, was very complimentary upon another set that he saw. We may be sure that those two years were years of happy continuous labour, and that the young man had imbibed as much as was good for him of the methods and technique of Mr. Hudson. He was quite enthusiastic about his master in those days. "Many had drawn Judge Willis, but that by master was most approved of." Best of all, the great minister, Sir Robert Walpole, gave a sitting, and Mr. Hudson produced a picture "entirely to his satisfaction, and likewise to his own. Many gentlemen admired it, and have bespoken copies. Sir Robert asked where he lived, who was his master, and wondered he had heard no more of him, and acknowledges no other picture to be his likeness but this."

Such passages in his father's letters to Cutcliffe as these provide the only particulars of young Reynolds's life at this time. Once, indeed, Hudson sent him to the auction room to buy a picture. The room was crowded, and, after a bustle at the door, the boy heard "Mr. Pope, Mr. Pope," whispered through the room. The crowd fell back deferentially, and in walked the great little man, "about four feet six inches high, very humpbacked and deformed," as Reynolds afterwards described him to Malone, bowing on each side, and very pleased with his reception. Every one, we are told, pressed forward to greet the little poet, and Reynolds himself, though in the second row, put his arm under that of the person in front of him, and grasped Mr. Pope's hand. Many years later, Reynolds gave a considerable sum for a fan painted, by the poet himself, with a design from the story of Cephalus and Procris, as a memento of this meeting, no doubt.

Reynolds's connection with Hudson was not destined to run to the natural limit of the apprenticeship. From some misunderstanding, which has never been properly

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explained, the boy left his master before two years of the four had passed. The circumstances of the parting have been the subject of much surmise, but with little real elucidation. Farington, the contemporary of Reynolds in his later years and his fellow-Academician, gives a circumstantial account, which, however, is more or less contradicted by the letters of Samuel Reynolds. Reynolds, he says, painted an admirable portrait of an elderly servant of Hudson's, a portrait so good that it excited his jealousy. We are then presented with the spectacle of the jealous man awaiting an opportunity to wreak his vengeance on the boy. Hudson told him to take a canvas over to Van Haaken, but, the evening being rainy, he waited till the following morning. At breakfast, Hudson asked why the picture had not gone the night before according to his orders. Reynolds said the rain prevented him, but that no harm could have been done, as he had taken it that morning before Van Haaken was out of bed. Said Hudson, "You have not obeyed my orders, and shall not stay in my house." Reynolds asked for time to write to his father, who otherwise might think he had committed some crime. But Hudson, though reproached by his own servant for his unreasonable conduct, was relentless, and Reynolds, thus turned out at a moment's notice, went over to his uncle's chambers in the Temple. From there he wrote to his father, who, after consultation with Lord Edgcumbe, directed him to return home.

Thus Farington, but Samuel Reynolds throws grave doubt upon the story. Writing to Cutcliffe on August 19, 1743, he says, "I have not meddled with Joshua's affair hitherto. . . . This resolution of mine I shall persevere in, not to meddle in it; I shall only say there is no controversy I was ever let into wherein I was so little offended with either party. In the meantime I

bless God and Mr. Hudson and you for the extreme success that has attended Joshua hitherto."

This does not seem like the letter of a man who would certainly have had a grievance had the facts been as stated by Farington. Furthermore, Reynolds was back in London during the following year, and was on the best of terms with Hudson. Hudson introduced him to the artists' club, which met, perhaps, at Old Slaughter's in St. Martin's Lane, and included himself, Roubilliac, Hogarth, McArdell, and other notable artists. He was also obliging enough to tell young Reynolds where his pictures were faulty, "and when he had finished anything of his own, he is pleased to ask Joshua's judgment, which is a great honour."

The history of the difference between master and pupil is not of great moment; the important point for himself and his friends was that, at the age of twenty, young Reynolds, after a bare two years' training in Hudson's studio, found himself thrown upon his own resources. He appears at once to have found work as a portrait painter in his native county. In January of 1744, his father wrote to Cutcliffe saying that he had then painted twenty portraits, including "one of the greatest man in the place, the commissioner of the dockyard," and that he had ten more bespoke. Reynolds seems to have taken rooms at Plymouth Dock, now Devonport, where he established his painting-room, but it is certain that he practised also in London. We know that he returned to town in 1744, and that he was there again in 1745. On the other hand, several portraits of local people which are known to have been painted by him at this period, suggest lengthy visits to Devonshire.

Among these were many portraits of the Eliot family, still at Port Eliot; Richard, the first lord, with Lady Eliot in white satin; and a conversation piece of Lord and

Lady Eliot and their children with Mrs. Goldsworthy and Captain Hamilton, who became the second husband of Lady Eliot. The captain carries one of the youngsters on his back, an early example of Reynolds's admirable method of giving variety and interest to portraiture. He painted Captain Hamilton alone in 1746, a portrait which in later life surprised him by its excellence, when he expressed his sorrow that he had made so little progress since his youth.

Other portraits which he certainly painted at this time were heads of his friends Mr. and Mrs. Craunch; six family portraits of the Kendal family, which are signed and dated 1744, and for which he apparently received three pounds ten each; and the portrait of the fascinating Miss Chudleigh, whom he met at Saltram, as we learn from Northcote. "Miss C.," he told that painter, "was eminently beautiful, and possessed the most delicate person he had ever seen." Others which have been ascribed to him, without much authority, as it would seem, were portraits of a Captain Chauncy, who was wounded at Guadaloupe, when in command of the *Ripon*, one of the captain's wife, and another of Alderman Facey, at one time in the Plymouth Athenæum.

The portrait of his father in the Cottonian Library at Plymouth, too, must have been painted in these early days. The only known canvas which must have been the result of his visit to London at this period is the group of Edward Gordon, of Bromley, with his sister Mrs. Mills and her husband, painted on the terrace of Gordon's house, a picture displaying a minute and laborious execution, quite at variance with Reynolds's methods of the next few years.

Northcote thought poorly of some of these early pictures of young Reynolds, and speaks of them as reflecting the true Hudsonian style, and as showing carelessness

of drawing. He says, too, that the stereotyped attitude of Hudson appeared in most of them, the gentlemen all with one hand in the waistcoat and the hat under the arm, an arrangement with obvious advantages to artists shaky in their drawing. Northcote even goes so far as to say that one sitter wished to have his hat on his head, and the picture, being finished, was sent home before Reynolds discovered that he had painted a second hat under his arm according to the Hudsonian formula. But these rather ill-natured remarks certainly apply to none of the pictures we have mentioned. Northcote, as a Plymouth man, may have seen others in his youth, the identity of which has since been lost, but, judging by some at least of these early canvases, it seems pretty certain that Reynolds was not long in escaping from any trammels which his contact with Hudson had imposed.

The close of a chapter in young Reynolds's life was marked by the death of his father in 1746. Joshua was summoned back from London by the illness which ended in Samuel's death on Christmas Day of that year. The growing prosperity in his profession must have been a comfort to the good old man in his last hours, and we may be sure that the boy had little to reproach himself with at the bedside of his dying parent. The features of Samuel Reynolds are still preserved in the portrait by Joshua in the Cottonian Library. Mr. Cotton himself put up a modest tablet to his memory in the church at Plympton, many years after his son had followed him to the grave. The amiable spirit of the father appears plainly enough in the few of his letters which have survived. Troubles came thickly for poor Samuel in his later years. We have no record of the death of his wife, but his heart was sadly torn by the loss of two of his children at the very moment that Joshua's success was the source of such satisfaction. There are pathetic

passages in a letter of his to Cutcliffe full of thanks for his kindness to Joshua, but making sad reference to his bereavement. Humphrey, his first-born, a promising lieutenant in the navy, was lost on his way home from India. "My son Humphrey's death," wrote the poor old man, "stuck by me very much, till it was drowned, if I may say so, in a still greater sorrow, and that was the death of my youngest son, Martin, whom I cannot yet write about without hurting myself." To another friend under the same affliction he wrote at the same time—

"I shall offer no arguments of consolation to you, who wanted them so much myself, and should still want them, if I did not consider that it is too apparent that all grief in these cases is to no purpose. But one thing I comfort myself with, which is perhaps an argument that you have omitted—that I have enjoyed them for some time, which, notwithstanding the grief of parting with them, is much better than not to have enjoyed them at all."

Reynolds himself left a touching little memorial of these family bereavements. There is extant a small pen drawing washed with India ink of a child leaning on the slab of a tomb, and pointing down to a scroll on which is written, "Humphrey, Martin, Samuel, all, all are gone."

CHAPTER II

PLYMOUTH AND ITALY

1747–1752

WE may be quite certain that the struggle in the rearing of his family which Samuel Reynolds had maintained at his schoolhouse during thirty-one years had left little opportunity for the saving of money, and that Joshua consequently faced the world in the beginning of 1747 without a patrimony of even the smallest dimensions. It is probable that his two unmarried sisters were in the same case, and that the assets of the little family of Reynolds were now confined to the industry and abilities of the young painter. Joshua was halfway through his twenty-fourth year; he had been engaged in painting of one sort or another for six years, and it was with the equipment that his studies and labours during that period had provided that he began his career in 1747. We may surmise that help from his married sister, Mrs. Palmer, was not wanting; one remembers the half of the premium for Mr. Hudson provided by that affectionate sister, and we shall see later that invaluable help was not lacking from her at another important crisis in Joshua's early life. We may suppose, then, that there were family consultations between Plympton and Torrington, where Mrs. Palmer was settled, and a discussion of ways and means when the three young people were turned from the

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grammar school by the death of their father. We know that Joshua took a house at Plymouth Dock, that his sisters Mary and Frances accompanied him there, and we may imagine as much good as we choose of the help forthcoming from the elder at Torrington. The wants of the little household were surely not many; the boy and the two girls had been reared in a frugal establishment at Plympton, and from what we know of the kindly Mrs. Palmer, it is pleasant as well as plausible to think of any gaps left by the want of sitters in those first years being filled by her good offices.

Reynolds used to speak in after-life of those two or three years at Plymouth as years passed in company from whom little improvement could be got. Malone says that "when he recollected this period of his life, he always spoke of it as so much time thrown away." The remark has been taken to mean that he was neglectful of his work, and given to vain idling and dreaming. Malone, indeed, speaks of "some little dissipation, after which he sat down seriously to study and practice of his art." But there is no evidence of anything of the sort. On the contrary, there are several portraits of this period which show how he was employed, rich in admirable qualities, and creditable to Reynolds at any stage of his career. Such are the study of the boy reading by a reflected light in the Normanton collection; the admirable portrait of himself in the possession of the Gwatkin family; and the other the well-known portrait of himself as a boy, with a palette and brushes, and shading the eyes with his hand, now in the National Portrait Gallery. There is also in the possession of Sir R. Edgcumbe the portrait of Mrs. Field, whose daughter his uncle, John Reynolds, had married, which is described by Cotton as "very beautiful, the carnations of great delicacy and clearness, and the features well defined, but

not so strongly pronounced by means of that depth of shadow which he afterwards adopted from the works of Titian and other Italian masters."

There is a landscape, too, of Plymouth at Port Eliot, painted in 1748, and a portrait of Lady Somers at Eastnor is another early work, all helping to prove that the boy was soon busy after his father's death. We shall see before long that the greater part of Reynolds's life was spent in the company of the best men and women of his day. What he bewailed in later life was the fact that three years of the most impressionable period of his youth were spent in the dull, if respectable, society of his sisters and the local Devonian notables.

We may think, then, of young Reynolds during 1747, and a couple of years following, as developing the local practice of a portrait painter, which we have seen him beginning after leaving Hudson and before his father's death. It may not be uninteresting to review the influences which had already affected him as an artist. He told Dr. Johnson long afterwards that his imagination was first excited in favour of art by reading Richardson's treatise. This was in his early boyhood, the days of the Jesuit's Treatise perhaps, certainly before his adoption of portraiture as a profession. Richardson was a dry and hard painter of the school continued by Hudson, but he was the prophet also of the grand style in painting, and wrote very enthusiastically about the renascence of that style in England. He saw a great similarity in the characters of the Greeks and Romans and the English, and was fully persuaded that it was in this happy country that the masterpieces of those great peoples would be repeated. Richardson's theories had a great deal more effect upon his contemporaries than his own practice of the arts. When Mr. Hogarth turned from the satire and portraiture in which he excelled to

the grand gusto in which he did not, it was almost certainly at the suggestion of Richardson. He painted his altar-pieces, and his Pools of Bethesda, and his Good Samaritans, only to show how much better plain British Bill Hogarth was at such work than all the great men of the south, to prove how easy it was for him to beat them all with their own tools, "in what the puffers in books (Mr. Richardson) call the great style of history painting." Of Richardson's influence on the youthful Reynolds there is no doubt whatever. He told Malone that Richardson's treatise so inflamed his mind, "that Raphael appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern times." It is important to remember this in estimating Reynolds as an artist. We shall see as we proceed that there were two Reynoldses from the beginning to the end of the chapter. There was first the boy Reynolds, dreaming of the grand style, but doing hack-work for Mr. Hudson, or painting honest heads in the great school of nature at Plymouth or London. Later we shall see the student at Rome and Florence and Venice, with a reverence for Michael Angelo and Raphael which often passed into adoration, but still very much occupied in discovering the processes with which lesser men got their effects, and noting very carefully methods and vehicles and pigments presently to be employed to much advantage by the fashionable portrait painter in London. Finally we shall see that portrait painter pursuing his calling with an industry which has perhaps never been equalled, acquiring fame and fortune by the facility with which he transferred the forms and faces of his contemporaries to his glowing canvases, and earning in an equal measure the envy and hate of most of his fellow-artists by the success and the wealth which his honest everyday toil brought to him. The other Reynolds of this period was Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the

Royal Academy, the stately figure-head of that assembly, with his periodical discourses on the virtues of the grand style. We really believe that this Reynolds in his heart despised the portrait painter in Leicester Fields; looked upon his business as outside the domain of real art, and sighed for opportunity for excursions into the serene regions of the grand gusto, whose delights and rewards he was continually extolling to the ingenuous youth of the schools. Mercifully the journeys he took into those regions were few, and were performed with only indifferent success. Reynolds painted the impressions of the people he saw transformed by the temperament of a true artist unspoiled by academic training, and only very rarely the creatures of his imagination.

Reynolds, in after-years, often blessed his stars that he and Mr. Hudson had so soon arrived at a difference. He considered his disagreement with that painter, as he told Malone, as "a very fortunate circumstance, since by this means he was led to deviate from the tameness and insipidity of his master." His bare two years with Hudson gave him the advantage of learning the grammar of the technique of his art, and his sojourn had not been enough prolonged to bend his style to the crude model of that painter. Very little of it remains in the portraits he painted even immediately after his leaving Hudson. The natural Reynolds appeared very early in such pretty incidents as the child pickaback with Captain Hamilton, or his own attitude in the youthful portrait of 1748. Such attitudes would have made old Hudson gasp, and would sadly have upset his arrangements with the useful Van Haaken. The practice Reynolds got from the painting of the honest faces of country gentlemen was worth a lifetime at the stippled crayon drawing which in after years his own Academy provided as the pabulum of the budding artist. It is noteworthy that a whole

century has been necessary to emancipate British art from the trammels which the teaching of the Academy imposed, and that it is only within living memory that a generation of students has arisen who have returned to the methods of study Reynolds himself employed. He never used the point at all, but painted in his figures with the brush from the first; and who will say that it was an unkind fate which forced him to dispense with the academic study which might have improved his drawing of arms and fingers, but would assuredly have impaired the originality and variety of his poses, and the grace and generous breadth which he introduced into English portraiture?

That same sojourn in Devonshire, after his father's death in 1746, brought Reynolds under an influence which there is no doubt profoundly affected his feeling for colour, and perhaps had as an ultimate result his elevation among the great colourists of the world. A few years earlier had died at Exeter a painter of great merit, one William Gandy, who was little known out of the West country. Northcote has recorded most of what is known of Gandy, and a sad dissolute dog he seems to have been. He was the son of another painter, James Gandy, who had worked for Vandyke, had acquired some of his master's manner, and had been caught young by the Duke of Ormonde, and kept as a sort of tame artist by that nobleman. It is said that many of James's pictures still in Ireland pass for those of the master, and that his copies of the great man's work are indistinguishable from the originals. His light, however, was hidden under the duke's bushel, and he died, according to Pilkington, almost unknown in 1689, full of years if not of honour.

His son William had learned his art from this able father, for he was a good sound painter. He went about the country painting portraits, but from all accounts was

a quarrelsome, difficult fellow. He would quarrel with a sitter because he was given boiled pork and peas for dinner, or with an influential patron because at an unexpected crush in a country house he was denied a room to himself. Though he had a distinguished style, his indolence prompted him to finish the draperies and accessories of his portraits from prints, and in a slovenly manner at that. But he was a competent artist, and there was a glow in his colour unknown to the Richardsonian and Hudsonian philosophy. Sir Godfrey Kneller is reported to have exclaimed, on seeing his work, "Good God! why does he bury his talents in the country?" Gandy, indeed, never left the West of England, because, as we are told, "he affected to be thought a person of too much consequence to venture up to London" at the time of the Jacobite troubles, and was accustomed to give himself mysterious airs as a politician deep in the councils of that party.

Gandy painted Northcote's father, the Plymouth watchmaker, and no doubt a great many other worthy bourgeois people in the west, and some very reputable portraits from his hand may still be seen in hospitals and poorhouses in Exeter. He died in 1729, before young Reynolds's time, but his works were, no doubt, often before the eyes of that observant youth; indeed, he said in after-life that "he had seen portraits by Gandy which were equal to Rembrandt." The tradition of Gandy's career, moreover, was still common talk in the county, and a remark of his reported to young Reynolds was perhaps as valuable as his practice. "A picture," said Gandy, "ought to have a richness in its texture as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese, and the reverse of a hard, husky, or dry manner." When one calls to mind the texture of the mellow whites and yellows of the mature Reynolds, one cannot doubt the

value of that homely hint about cream and cheese falling on the receptive ears of the student. It was certainly worth all the ideas of the grand gusto which he imbibed from Mr. Richardson.

After two years at Plymouth, spent in the influences and occupations we have examined, came a chance to young Reynolds which was destined to end his stay in his native county, and to exercise a controlling influence upon his future career and upon the development of his art. Early in 1749 a young member of the Keppel family, destined later to great distinction in his profession, Commodore George Keppel, aged twenty-four, and commanding the *Centurion*, was entrusted with a diplomatic mission to the States of Barbary, and appointed to the command of the British squadron in the Mediterranean. He sailed on April 25 from Spithead, but, meeting heavy weather in the Channel, sprang the topmasts of his vessel, and put into Plymouth to refit. While awaiting the completion of his repairs, he paid a visit to his friend, Lord Edgcumbe, at Mount Edgcumbe. Here he met Reynolds, now a young man two years his senior; an intimacy founded upon a mutual liking followed, and ended in an invitation from the young commodore to the young painter to join the *Centurion* as the friend and passenger of its commander. Reynolds, with his eye on the educative possibilities of the trip, with Rome and Italy as its objective, gladly accepted the invitation. He settled his affairs at Plymouth, packed up his easel and palette, and sailed with Keppel in the *Centurion* for Lisbon on May 11, 1749.

The ship arrived at Lisbon on the 24th of the same month, and lay there a week. At Lisbon Reynolds had the advantage of seeing a "bull feast" and the great Catholic procession of Corpus Christi, two totally differing spectacles, each impressive in its way, which doubtless

appealed to the picturesque sense of the painter. A few days later the *Centurion* touched at Cadiz, where was enacted another bull feast. Thence she proceeded to Tetuan, where Keppel had heard of the durance of certain British prisoners at the hands of the Moorish governor of the town, who had also the insolence to confine the British Consul to his house. Keppel proceeded without orders, in the good eighteenth-century manner common with the sailors of those days, to redress the grievances of the prisoners by the persuasive effect of his ship in the bay. By June 29 he was at Algiers, and in parley with the Dey in the matter of that potentate's piratical dealing with British ships.

It is quite easy to gather from contemporary records the grievances which drew Keppel and his squadron to Algiers; the news sheets of the middle of the eighteenth century are full of the enterprising doings of the Barbary pirates. Their insolence knew no bounds. They essayed to catch the King of Naples while His Majesty was pheasant-shooting on the island of Procida; the Pope of Rome in this very year ordered out his galleys, under M. de Bussy, to put a stop, if possible, to their insults; they even sailed out boldly into the Atlantic to attack British merchantmen. Keppel apparently was entrusted with a mission which had for its object some compromise or treaty with these rovers; it is certain that their existence was acknowledged in quite modern times, for a famous English yachtsman, Mr. Milner Gibson, sailed his vessel in those southern waters, under a certificate of safe conduct from the Dey of Algiers, well on in the reign of Queen Victoria. It is recorded, too, that Keppel's dealings with the Dey were only the beginning of negotiations which were prolonged over two years. They, however, produced an interview of which Reynolds was quite possibly a spectator, and which he, no doubt, related

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to Northcote, who has preserved it. The incident illustrates very pleasantly the times, and also the methods of the young English naval commanders of King George the Second. The Dey was much incensed, we are told, at the bold bearing of the "beardless boy," as he called the commodore, and began to talk of bowstrings and the ministers of death. "The King, my master," replied Keppel, with a bold glance at the Dey's hairy face, "does not measure the wisdom of his servants by the length of their beards, otherwise he would have sent a he-goat to represent him. If it be your pleasure to put me to death you may do so, but there are enough Englishmen in those ships"—pointing out of the window to the squadron riding in the bay—"to make me a glorious funeral pyre."

We learn from a letter of a later date to his kind patron, Lord Edgcumbe, the advantages which the voyage with Keppel brought the painter. "I have been at Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Algiers, and Mahon. . . . Your lordship will excuse me if I say that from the kind treatment and great civilities I have received from the commodore, I fear I have even laid your lordship under an obligation to him on my account, since from nothing but your lordship's recommendation I could possibly expect to meet with that polite behaviour with which I have always been treated. I had the use of his cabin and his study of books as if they had been my own, and when he went ashore he generally took me with him, so that I had not only an opportunity of seeing a great deal, but I saw it with all the advantages as if I had travelled as his equal."

On one of the cruises of the *Centurion* she touched at Minorca, and on August 23 Reynolds went ashore at Port Mahon. Here he was most kindly and hospitably received by General Blakeney, the governor, who would not allow him to be at any charges for his

lodgings, and invited him constantly to a seat at his own table. While at Mahon, Reynolds painted portraits of most of the officers of the garrison, and one of these, in later years, recalled with much indignation the appalling rise in the painter's prices since those early days. His stay here now apparently became professional, and it marks his parting with Commodore Keppel, with whom, however, he had formed a friendship which lasted their lives, and was the occasion of much help to Reynolds on his return to England.

Northcote tells us that the painter's stay in Minorca was much prolonged by an accident. He rode out one day in the island, his horse by some mischance stumbled and fell down a precipice, or hillside, threw the painter, and badly mangled his face. He was confined to his room for some time, and it has always been assumed that the result of his accident was visible to the end of his life in the slight distortion of the upper lip, which we have learned to accept as a characteristic feature of his kindly face. The assumption, however, is open to grave doubts. The imperfect lip appears in the well-known picture of him as a boy which we have noticed, now in the National Portrait Gallery, and which was certainly painted before his journey abroad. A living member of his family, Sir Pearce Edgcumbe, has pointed out that the defect of the lip is much more probably caused by a slight harelip, a blemish which occurred in other members of his family of a generation close to Reynolds himself. His nephews, Nicholas and Septimus Johnson, had the same defect.

Upon his recovery Reynolds sailed to Leghorn, and from that port he proceeded to Rome, where he must have arrived towards the end of the year 1749. We may take his arrival at that city as the fulfilment of the scheme of travel and education of which Keppel's invitation was the opportunity, and his voyage with that sailor

the shorter and least important part. There is documentary evidence in the possession of his family that before setting out Joshua had borrowed money for a long stay in Italy from his married sisters, Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Johnson, to both of whom he gave his bond for repayment when the knowledge which their kindness enabled him to acquire should have borne fruit.

At Rome, Reynolds seems to have been strangely silent, or the letters which he wrote home have perished. The only letter known at this period of his life is that we have quoted to Lord Edgcumbe, a letter in which he offered to make a copy of any picture among the masterpieces as a present to his patron. But Reynolds's two years in Italy were years of steady uninterrupted labour we may be sure, and the fortunate preservation of his notebooks, which are in the possession of the family or in public collections, enables us to trace with some accuracy his studies during those years. It was at the end of those years, as Ruskin has said, that he "rose from the feet of the greatest masters of Italy to share their throne."

It is interesting to speculate upon what opportunities Reynolds had found before he left England of seeing examples of art, other than the native portraits which we have mentioned so often. What pictures were there at Mount Edgcumbe, at Saltram, or at Port Eliot? It was before the days of public exhibitions, of the throwing open of great houses, of national galleries, or of royal collections. Country houses were, of course, being filled with pictures of the Italian school, but few were open to young Reynolds at that time. We may be sure he saw little of great art at Mr. Hudson's, and the engrossing occupations of his short stay in that gentleman's painting room probably left little opportunity for going to Hampton Court, where at that time hung the famous cartoons of

Raphael. It is probable, indeed, that his first introduction to the art of past ages was when, at the age of twenty-six, he stood among the frescoes in the Vatican.

It is quite characteristic of Reynolds's honesty of mind that he confessed to a feeling of disappointment upon first seeing those masterpieces in the Sistine Chapel. It is true that he records a feeling of exaltation ("self-importance," he calls it) at finding himself capable of appreciating offhand the great conceptions of Michael Angelo, but he owns that "in passing through in my return the rooms of Raphael, they appeared of an inferior order."

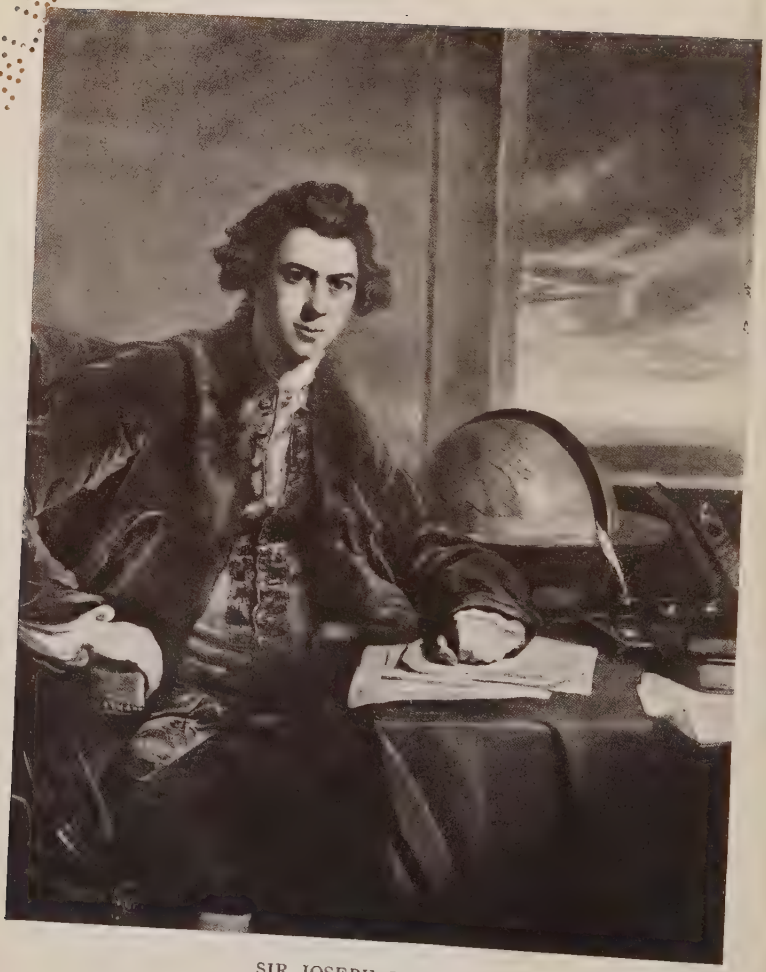
In making that confession he only enunciates the eternal truth that most which is really worth having in this world is the result alone of labour. A natural taste for refined pleasures is of course indispensable, but even for those so endowed, the messages conveyed by great minds in the language of the fine arts, in letters, in music, in painting, are only for those who have taken the pains to make themselves worthy. See how Reynolds himself states the case. "I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican, but on confessing my feelings to a brother student of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect upon him, or rather that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind, and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever relishing these divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them." He continued that he never for a moment supposed that the judgment of mankind was at fault in the matter of Raphael, and he acknowledged that his inability to appreciate those masterpieces in a moment

was a matter of deep humiliation to him. "I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted; I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. . . . It was necessary, as it was expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become as a little child."

It was in this spirit that the young painter began his two years' sojourn in Rome, and turned to those exponents of the grand style of which he had first read in Mr. Richardson's treatise; began to copy them, "viewed them again and again, even affected to feel their merits and to admire them more than I did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that the great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. . . . On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness, as if it were expected that our minds, like tinder, should instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raphael's genius."

We have little means of knowing to what extent the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel offered young Reynolds subjects for copying. Leslie speaks of having seen a study of a group of heads from the Coronation of Charlemagne, and there is little doubt that he gave much attention to such details of Raphael's great compositions as appealed to him. But his method of study was apparently quite different from that of most art students. It was intellectual rather than practical and technical. We know that the grandeur of Michael Angelo's conceptions struck him from the first, and the breadth of his light and shade, the might and force of his drawing, and the vigour of his composition, remained the ideals of Reynolds throughout his life, as the very apotheosis of the grand style which he

worshipped. Raphael he must have pondered over deeply throughout the two years of his sojourn in Rome, and it was doubtless from a reverent study of that master that he drew some of the inspiration for those almost countless presentments of feminine loveliness which are so precious a part of his mature work. His notebooks are full of slight sketches of attitudes, of figures, of verbal notes of expression, of arrangement of colour or flow of line from both painters. Reynolds from the first had a quick eye for material of this sort, which might be stored for future use. An angel with a trumpet in a fresco at Rome he noted as useful for Fame, if he should ever have to paint that lady. Then, again, the figure of Christ in the white sheet in the School of St. Mark struck him as a mighty useful model for the ghost of Cæsar appearing to Brutus. We shall see later that many of his finest portraits owe something of their air or pose or composition to pictures by great names which struck him, and were duly scratched in a hasty jotting in one or other of these books; to name two well-known ones, Mrs. Sheridan as St. Cecilia was composed from a note of an angel playing a harpsichord in one of these useful compilations; Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse would certainly never have been painted in the pose she was had not Michael Angelo painted sibyls and prophets in the Sistine Chapel. These slight pilferings have been much condemned in Reynolds, partly, no doubt, because he at times condemned the abuse of the practice in others. But to some of us they seem a harmless plagiarism. Is not art of all kinds full of such petty larceny? Is the Warwickshire yeoman to be condemned as a blundering plagiarist because Chaucer and Boccaccio and a score of others of his predecessors had treated the same subjects and incidents before him? The real test of the guilt or the innocence of the plagiarist is the success which attends his manipulation of the



SIR JOSEPH BANKS

lifted material, and in this respect Reynolds will bear comparison with most of his fellow-sinners.

We have it on Reynolds's own authority that he followed very little the usual practice of the Roman student of those days, that of making copies of well-known pictures for connoisseurs at home. He had no very great respect for the English dilettante even in those early days, as appears very plainly from one of his recorded remarks upon those he saw at Rome. "Some Englishmen, when I was in the Vatican, came there and spent above six hours in writing down whatever the antiquary dictated to them. They scarcely ever looked at the paintings the whole time." Besides, he had come to Rome to study, and with a purse sufficient to maintain himself without the drudgery of copying dictated by the taste of amateurs. He confessed afterwards that what little work of the kind he did get through he regarded as a complete waste of time. Certain caricatures in oil of notable English visitors at Rome he did perpetrate. It is strange to think of Reynolds in connection with caricature, but some half-dozen are known to-day as having come from his brush in Rome. The best known of these is a parody of Raphael's School of Athens, with a large number of English gentlemen arranged in the attitudes of that famous composition. Another canvas caricatured Lord Wicklow getting into his carriage, and may yet be in the possession of that nobleman's family. Reynolds's notebooks contain lists of the faces which appear in some of these "caricaturas which I did in Rome in 1751." They are the names of some score of influential gentlemen, and the inclusion of so many personages in a relatively few compositions was no bad means of laying a foundation for future patronage. Anyway, Reynolds soon discontinued the practice, for the reason, as he records in one of those wise sentences

of which so many have survived, that "it was his aim and duty to discover only the perfections of those he painted."

One of his notebooks contains a list of "Copies of the pictures I made in Rome," which may or may not include the few pictures he made on commission for patrons; it has a value, however, as showing that at this time Reynolds was a rapid worker. In three days he made a copy of Titian's "Philip II. on Horseback"; one day, April 20, was sufficient for "Rembrandt by Himself" in the Corsini Palace. Between May 30 and June 10 he made the copy of Guido's "St. Michael" at the Capuchins, a copy which is, or was recently, over the altar in the chapel at Hampton Court Palace. We have mention also of "my own picture, and Jacomo's picture." The first, no doubt, is the portrait of himself, which Northcote mentions. "There is now (1816) in Rome an extraordinary fine portrait of Reynolds, painted by himself when in his studies in that city, and left by him in the house where he lodged at the time." Jacomo's picture is doubtless the portrait of Giacomo, some model or servant. Beyond these and a few others of the list we have no record of Reynolds's actual painting in Rome, but the notes of the pictures which attracted his attention are full enough.

These notes suggest that his taste was wide, and confined to no particular school, though, as we follow him through other towns of Italy, we shall find him yielding unstinted admiration to painters whose works do not commend themselves to modern criticism, and omitting mention of others whose fame is now believed to be founded on adamant. Of Vandyke's portrait of "Pontius the Engraver" he remarks, "the best portrait I ever yet saw of his;" an angel's head by Correggio in the same gallery, the Palazzo del Secretario, was "the best likewise I ever yet saw of him." He thought Velasquez's "Innocent X."

at the Doria Pamphili the finest portrait in the world. Among other pictures which attracted his attention in the Palazzo Falconiere were two Borgognones, which he describes as "fine;" a Holy Family by Poussin, "in his very best manner, the Virgin a noble figure," and the "Ecce Homo" and the "St. Cecilia" of Guido.

In the Borghese, Baroccio, Domenichino, and Annibale Carracci and others of the decadent school, contend for his admiration with Titian, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. Titian's "Last Supper," his "Borgia" and "Machiavelli," his "Schoolmaster," and his own portrait, are all noted, together with Raphael's "St. Catherine," which we may see to-day in our own National Gallery; and Michael Angelo's "Crucifixion," of which he notices the legend, "that a porter or malefactor was killed" in order that the great artist might present the death-agony direct from nature. Two Venuses by Titian he declares, "like all others in Rome, not equal to that of Florence," a remark which seems to suggest that he had already been north to that city, but is probably a note added to his Roman memoranda at a later date. In the "Nymph" by Veronese he recognizes "a delicate picture." Here, too, is an appreciation of Poussin, "a landscape in his very best manner, and indeed it is painted in the grandest style that can be conceived. 'Tis finished up at once, except the trees, that have the sky for their ground, a large light pencil, no outline throughout, and leaves touched in Bassano's manner."

In the Palazzo Altieri two Claudes attract his attention, "much the best I have seen by this master, or indeed any other;" in Guido's "Rape of Helen" the "airs of the heads of the women wonderfully fine." He thought poorly of "Dido transfixed with the sword of Æneas," though "a woman on the left side of the picture, with her handkerchief to her eyes, was a wonderful genteel

figure." In the Rospigliosi he noted, of course, the "Aurora" of Guido, and Domenichino's "David and Samson" and "Adam and Eve."

A remark of Reynolds on Bernini's bust of Montoja is not without interest. "The marble is so wonderfully managed that it appears flesh itself; the upper lip, which is covered with hair, has all the lightness of nature. This bust in no respect yields to the best in the antique. Indeed, I know none that in my opinion is equal to it. 'Twas said to be so wonderfully like—and indeed, from that strong character of nature which it has, one easily believes it to have been like—that those who knew him used to say it was Montoja petrified."

This early preference for a modern artist who so manages marble as to appear flesh, to the antique masters, who confined that material so strictly to abstractions both of form and expression, is interesting. It is in direct conflict with Reynolds's ideas of the generalizations which he contended were essential to the grand style, and is one among many illustrations of the complete variance between his artistic instincts and the theories he imbibed from others.

It was in observations and studies such as these that Reynolds, as we say, passed two years in Rome. There is very little to show what part of his time was spent in actual painting; some considerable number of studies he must have made, and the deafness which ensued from a chill caught in the Vatican seems to suggest long spells at the easel. But we must think also of Reynolds at this time as the devout and observant student of the great works he saw about him, pondering over the problems they presented to the craftsman, analyzing methods and technique, but imbibing unconsciously the artistic atmosphere with which he was surrounded until it became a part of his nature, and, above all, acquiring what Northcote

so well defined as "that grace of thinking to which he was principally indebted for his subsequent reputation as a portrait painter."

Of his ordinary life in Rome one knows very little. The year 1750 was that of the Papal Jubilee, which brought English and European visitors to the city in more than ordinary numbers. Leslie suggests that the list of persons whose heads he painted in his seven caricatures probably represents very completely those of the great people whom he met and knew. Four at least of those men of rank and wealth were his friends and patrons in after-life—Lord Charlemont, Sir William Lowther, Lord Downe, and Lord Bruce.

There was a small band of students at Rome with young Reynolds who were not unknown as artists in later days—Richard Wilson, then studying for portraiture, which he had later to abandon for landscape; Nathaniel Hone, the miniature painter, the consistent hater and reviler of Reynolds in his prosperity; and a man less known, John Astley. One wonders whether a coolness between Reynolds and Hone originated even in those early days. In one of the notebooks is a "malicious little sketch of a pair of knock-kneed, splay-footed legs, surmounted by a large sketching-board and a cocked hat," and labelled "Master Hone." Astley, we imagine, must have much enlivened the student life at Rome. He was apparently a swaggering, mercurial fellow, usually in difficulties, and always out at elbows in those days. There was a story of him, at a picnic at Tivoli, where he unguardedly removed his coat and displayed the back of his waistcoat, made of one of his canvases bearing a very natural representation of a waterfall. He came back to England at much the same time as Reynolds, and later set up painter in Dublin, where he was accustomed to frighten the demoiselles by using his unsheathed sword

as a mahlstick. The rogue painted his way towards London, cut a figure at the Knutsford Assembly, where Lady Duckenfield Daniel, a rich widow, fell in love with the fascinating painter and married him. She and her daughter both dying soon after, Astley stepped into £5000 a year and a Cheshire estate, purchased Schomberg House in Pall Mall, and lived in great style for a time.

On May 3, 1752, after a short excursion to Naples, Reynolds turned homeward, going by easy stages to Florence. We follow him through Castel Nuovo, Narni (where he noticed the Augustan Bridge), Castellano, Terni, and Spoleto. At Assisi he sketched one of the gates, but has made no mention of Giotto or Cimabue. At Perugia he highly commends Baroccio, and has a word for Perugino's "Marriage of the Virgin," with a remark in addition, "an infinite number of his pictures about Perugia," with which, apparently, he was little struck. At Arezzo, on the 9th, he found Baroccio's works again much to his liking, "some angels and women wonderfully genteel, the Virgin a fine figure." The next day he was in Florence.

Here he remained nearly two months, where, as might be expected, he was under the spell of Michael Angelo. "When I am here, I think Michael Angelo superior to the whole world for greatness of taste," though he admits that John di Bologna among sculptors, and Raphael of the painters, drag him towards them when he is in the presence of their works elsewhere. At Florence he began to get in touch with his friends in England, and in a draft of a letter which he no doubt wrote, we find that he was being urged to stay as long as possible in that city. His inclinations were to fall in with the suggestion. He felt it necessary, as it seems, to become known to those who were considered the greatest living painters at that day—Italians like Pompeo Battoni and

Zuccarelli, who were living upon the tradition of their great predecessors. None but the Italian taste was then acknowledged in England; even his patron Edgcumbe had written to Reynolds advising him to put himself under Battoni. But Reynolds knew better, and chose his masters in Rome with greater sagacity. The real value of the living painters of Italy to him was in the way of personal introductions and recommendations, and is suggested in the following sentence from the draft: "By being in too great a hurry, I shall, perhaps, ruin all, when by staying a month longer, my fame will arrive before me, and nobody will dare to find fault with me, since my conduct will have had the approbation of the greatest living painters."

There is reason to believe that he began to solicit sittings for portraits after leaving Rome; it is certain that he painted two at least in the north of Italy. One of these was painted in the house of Zuccarelli, and this "Portrait of a Gentleman" was evidently of a style new to that painter. Farington tells us that he turned to Marchi (who came to England with Reynolds as his assistant), after looking at the painting, and remarked with enthusiasm, "Che spirito ha quest' uomo." It was at Florence, too, that he painted the portrait of Joseph Wilton, the English sculptor, a portrait which, as we learn from the same authority, gave "a brilliant display of those qualities in which he so eminently excelled." There are also finished sketches in his Florentine books of feminine sitters which suggest portraiture and sittings either of models or patrons. Finally, we get the first of a numerous collection of memoranda of his own methods of painting at Florence, memoranda which he continued through the greater part of his working life. "The ground colour, blue-black and white; first sitting, the features marked firm with red; next sitting, the red

colours—blue-black, vermilion, lake, carmine, white, drying oil."

On July 4 Reynolds left Florence for Bologna, where he remained about a fortnight. He was enthusiastic over the "Holy Family" of Corregio at Parma, the painter whose northern prototype he eventually became. "It gave me as great a pleasure as ever I received from looking at a picture. The airs, the heads, expression, and colouring are in the utmost perfection." But it is at Bologna that Reynolds is most enthusiastic, and that mainly about painters which modern critics regard disdainfully. The three Carracci, Guido, and Domenichino, as represented in that city, are his prime favourites.

The "Crowning with Thorns" and "Flagellation of Christ" of Ludovico Carracci were "divine works, but turned intolerably black." The "Communion of St. Girolamo," by Agostino Carracci, "very fine." The "Noble Charity" of Ludovico, again, "is in the most truly noble style that it is possible to imagine." The "St. Girolamo," by the same artist, is "a most miraculous picture in the greatest Greek style, if you will allow the expression, for I look upon this figure, as well as some others of Ludovico's best, to be in painting what the Laocoon is in sculpture," and so on. Annibale and Agostino, of the same family, are also praised in no measured terms.

Of Guido's "S. Giotti Enthroned," he says, "a most admirable picture by Guido. There is a certain softness in Guido that is wonderfully pleasing, this in his very best manner; the sheep and the other parts I could reach to has the genteelest pencilling I ever saw." The same painter's "Crucifix" is "prodigiously fine," the Virgin kissing the forehead of Christ is "finely painted," the Dio Padre "a noble figure, a noble figure!"

From Bologna the painter went to Venice by Mantua

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and Ferrara, where he remained from July 24 to August 16. Here, again, he made voluminous notes of the works of the Venetian School, which, as we shall see hereafter, had a profound influence on his art. He left a very interesting memorandum of his method of study at Venice, which shows the points which attracted him throughout. "The method I took to avail myself of their principles was this. When I observed any extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or the drawing of the figures. He deduced from these observations that among the Venetians about one quarter of the area was devoted to light, one quarter to deep shade, and half to the middle tones."

Of the individual pictures which he saw in Venice, Reynolds made very elaborate notes, notes dealing not only with generalities and composition, but with minute particulars of technique and colour. It is perhaps unnecessary to follow these; they may be read at length in the published notes which he left. But his favourites appear to have been Tintoretto, Titian, and Veronese. Of Tintoretto, the "Last Supper," the "Marriage of Cana," the "Scourging," "Christ washing the Feet of the Disciples," the "Manna," and the "Conversion of St. Paul," all receive minute attention. Titian's "Descent from the Cross," the "Holy Ghost," the "Assumption," "John the Baptist," and "Pietro Martire," are all distinguished by such remarks as "noble," "nobly painted," "admirable pictures," "the drawing in general noble, particularly of the right leg of him that flies." There are long notes about the "Banquet" of Veronese, the "Virgin and Bambino," "a most admirable picture,"

and he notices with admiration the "Magdalen washing the Feet of Christ," the "Purification," and many others.

Other artists commended are Bassano, "Child painted in the great style;" Salviati, "as fine as Titian or Paolo, 'tis in their style;" Paris Bordone, "in the style of Titian;" Giorgione is only mentioned once, the "Flagellation of Christ."

Reynolds at length turned homeward. On August 16 he set out for Padua, and may be traced in the few following days at Torre Confini, Peschiera, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan. Between Turin and the Alps he met his old master Hudson, who with Roubilliac the sculptor was hurrying to Rome. Northcote suggests that Hudson was going to that city merely to say he had been there. There is some plausibility in the remark, for it is certain that Mr. Hudson overtook Reynolds in Paris during a rest of a few weeks which he made there, and the two returned to England together. It argues Reynolds's confidence in himself that he brought from Rome with him as assistant the young Italian, Giuseppe Marchi, who, as we shall see, remained under him, with a small interval, throughout his life. At Lyons Reynolds apparently was wanting the money which no doubt awaited him at Paris, for the faithful Marchi was given two louis out of the six which remained in Reynolds's pocket, and told to find his way to Paris and rejoin his patron there. It is recorded that he walked the whole way, and found Reynolds eight days later.

At Paris Reynolds saw most of the sights, found time to paint two portraits, one of Mr. Gautier, and another of Mrs. Chambers, the wife of the architect, afterwards Sir William, and Reynolds's colleague at the Academy. He thought meanly of contemporary French art, we may believe, from the opinions which he set on record.

"The French cannot boast of above one painter of a

truly just and correct taste, free from any mixture of affection or bombast, and he was always proud to own from what models he had formed his style—to wit, Raphael and the antique. But all the others of the nation seem to have taken their ideas of grandeur from romances, instead of the Roman or Grecian histories. Their heroes hold up their heads and carry themselves with an air like a *petit maître* with his dancing master at his elbow, thus corrupting the true taste from the pure, the simple, the grand style, by a mock majesty and false magnificence."

Reynolds was just a month in Paris, and arrived in London on October 16, 1752.

CHAPTER III

ST. MARTIN'S LANE AND GREAT NEWPORT STREET

1753–1759

SOME of Reynolds's biographers have been at pains to explain how it was that upon landing in England he went to his native west country; Northcote, for instance, says he was in indifferent health, and sought his native air as a cure. Altogether it seems natural that Reynolds should have wished to see his friends after his long absence; in any case, he went to Plymouth in October of 1753; and made a stay of three months. What his domestic arrangements were we do not know. His sister Frances was probably staying either with Mrs. Palmer or with Mrs. Johnson at Torrington, and it is likely that Reynolds took apartments in Plymouth. Here, at any rate, he set to work, and among the first canvases he painted was a head of the eminent Dr. Mudge of that town, a portrait for which he received five guineas. Leslie thinks that this and another head of a young lady were the only portraits he painted at Plymouth. Dr. Mudge's picture is still in the hands of his descendants, and those who have seen it describe it as a noble head, broadly and ably painted. It is, however, remarkable as an early portrait of Reynolds in which the carnations have utterly disappeared, either from his

own faulty methods, or by the efforts of the restorers and cleaners who have destroyed so much of his work.

It is said that while Reynolds was at Plymouth his friend Lord Edgcumbe urged him strongly to establish himself as soon as possible in London. There was probably little persuasion required, for it is certain that, after his student period in Italy, Reynolds had a soul altogether above the practice of a provincial portrait painter, and it was no doubt in fulfilment of plans formed long beforehand that early in 1753 he turned again to London, and took rooms in St. Martin's Lane, a neighbourhood at that time much haunted by artists. Careful antiquaries like Mr. John Thomas Smith of "Nollekens and his Times," the "Book for a Rainy Day," and other curious works, have recorded how the house itself had the proper artistic atmosphere as the former residence of Thornhill, Van Nost, and Francis Hayman. Behind the house was a room which had been the studio of Roubilliac, a room used later as an academy of artists, where Reynolds himself, Mortimer, McArdell the engraver, Nollekens, and others met often in the evenings for drawing from the round or the life. Here he was joined by his sister Frances, who was his housekeeper for some years, but discharged the duties of that office with little success.

That same failure of Frances has been charged against Reynolds by some who have been unable to appreciate the real amiability of his character, as a proof of his coldness, selfishness, and what not, but with great injustice, as it would seem. Fanny Burney, who knew Frances well, gives us a very clear insight into her temperament. This was the very reverse of that of her brother. Poor Frances was a nervous, unstable woman, tormented perpetually with an inability to make up her mind, and constantly worried to distraction by the small annoyances of life, worries which her brother, by an effort

of will, had trained himself to disregard from his earliest days. Reynolds's habit of life was one of perfect order and punctuality, and it is not strange that the lack of those qualities in his sister should have resulted in a lack of sympathy between the pair. There is no record of any unkindness on his part, or of any substantial grievance on hers, but it is certain that their failure to understand each other was the cause of much unhappiness for that unfortunate lady.

It is doubtful, however, whether her nature was capable of happiness under any conceivable circumstances. There was some story of an unrequited love which may have added to the torments of the poor, self-conscious creature. She painted feeble miniatures and copies of her brother's pictures, which made other people laugh, and himself cry, as he ruefully explained. We shall get frequent glimpses of Frances in the course of our inquiry, but may here summarize her hapless life. After many years in London, which were years of misery for her and of discomfort for him, Joshua pensioned her off, and she returned to Devonshire. Here she painted her poor little pictures, felt and expressed the need of contact with the arts and sciences to keep her poor powers agoing, and continued to torment herself with such questions as whether she should come to London without compromising her brother or herself by not staying at his house, and if so, whether she might venture as near as Windsor. One hears of her at Paris in 1768, and later as a lodger of the learned Dr. Hoole, translator of Ariosto, whose effigy she painted as a frontispiece to his masterpiece. One may read the heart-searchings of this poor lady in voluminous notes and drafts of letters never sent, commonplace books, and the like, very eloquent passages of which are printed in a valuable note by Tom Taylor.

GIUSEPPI MARCHI

Although Reynolds only began that invaluable series of pocket-books which record his professional engagements two years later, there is no doubt that he was soon hard at work in London. The first portrait he painted in town is said to be that of his assistant Marchi decked in a turban, a picture still to be seen in the collection of the Royal Academy. Mr. Hudson was good enough to call to see how his pupil was getting on, and happened to see this production on the easel. "Reynolds," said he, "you do not paint as well as you did before you went to Italy." We have no doubt the good Hudson really believed what he said, for there was much in Reynolds's painting which he could never have understood or appreciated. It is quite clear that his aims and methods were as Greek to many of the critics of that day. The reputation of Kneller was still at its height in England; he was considered superior to Vandyke, as we are told. Mr. Ellis, another of Reynolds's fellow-artists, strolled into the room in St. Martin's Lane about the same time. He, like Hudson, saw a painting by young Reynolds on the easel. "Ah, Reynolds, this will never do. Why, you don't paint in the least like Kneller. Shakespeare in poetry and Kneller in painting, damme," added Mr. Ellis, and walked out of the room. *Les grands esprits se rencontrent*, we seem to remember a poet and a reviewer, and another famous "This will never do," a century or so later.

Reynolds really had little competition during those first years of his career. Hogarth had ceased painting portraits, and was engaged on the grand style; Wilson was turning to those landscapes which we value now, but which few valued then; Gainsborough and Romney were yet to appear in London. Reynolds's only rivals were Hudson and Cotes, and men of the rank in art of Mr. Ellis. What he thought of this band is very clear from a memorandum of a later date which has survived.

"They have got a set of postures which they apply to all persons indiscriminately, the consequence of which is that all their pictures look like so many signposts; and if they have a history or family piece to paint, the first thing they do is to look over their commonplace book containing sketches they have stolen from various pictures; then they search their prints over, and pilfer one figure from one print, and another from a second, but never take the trouble to think for themselves."

We are all human, and this seems a very human touch of the excellent Reynolds. One would have thought that the practice described would have given some little variety to the compositions and poses of those artists, even if at the cost of some originality. Besides, one remembers those Italian sketches of the Angel which would do for Fame, and the Christ for the ghost of Julius Cæsar, and we may have occasion to note some very famous figures which owed their origin to ideas taken from canvases or frescoed walls in Italy. But our artist made good use of his gatherings, and the others did not, which makes the difference. And no one will quarrel in the main with his estimate of the portrait painters of 1753.

One of the few contemporary artists of whom Reynolds made any disparaging remark was Liotard, the Swiss, who had a short vogue in London for a few years following 1753. Liotard was something of a charlatan, one imagines; he used to appear in the Levantine dress, with a turban, which he had adopted after a short visit to Constantinople, and was known as the Turk. "The only merit," said Reynolds, "in Liotard's pictures is neatness, which as a general rule is the characteristic of a low order of genius, or rather of no genius at all. His pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for their amusement, nor is there any person, how poor soever his talent may

be, but in a few years, by dint of practice, may possess themselves of every qualification in art which this great man has got."

Liotard, by his pastels, is ranked rather higher by modern critics than he was by Reynolds. A favourable specimen of his work is the portrait of Maria, Lady Coventry, now at Amsterdam; and his "Belle Chocolatière," at Dresden, has decorated the London hoardings for some years in a famous advertisement.

It is certain that the new painter of thirty years of age in St. Martin's Lane was very well employed, and that there was soon a steady procession of sitters to that painting-room, so much so that before the year was out his place was not wide enough for his practice, and Reynolds rented a house to himself in Great Newport Street, Long Acre, No. 5, on the north side. He took occasion at the same time to raise his prices to those of the eminent Hudson—twelve guineas for a head, twenty-four for a half-length, forty-eight for the complete figure. This increased scale of charges had no effect upon his practice, unless indeed to increase it, and in a very few years Reynolds again followed Hudson's lead, and the charges of both were fixed at fifteen, thirty, and sixty guineas. And at these prices fashionable London began to flock to Newport Street for their portraits in such numbers that even Reynolds's industry was scarce able to keep pace with it.

That industry was indeed phenomenal. Farington says he received five to seven sitters a day, and began work at seven in the morning. We do not imagine fashion was very likely to find itself in Great Newport Street at that hour, and we have it on his niece's authority that he began his day with a walk round the Park before breakfast; also when his pocket-books begin two years later, they disclose a list of 120 sitters in the year only,

increasing very soon to 150, and in one single year to 184. So we conclude that Mr. Farington was misled by the generosity of his imagination. But there is no doubt of Reynolds's immediate success; and a hundred or so of sitters, paying for pictures at the rate of from twelve to fifty pounds, provided a very comfortable income for a painter setting up in London during his first year. Apart from all details of sittings and prices, there is a fact recorded which speaks much for this early prosperity. Reynolds engaged Peter Toms, an able painter, as assistant in addition to Marchi, and he received Mr. Thomas Beach and Mr. Hugh Barron into his studio as pupils. Toms had been drapery man at Hudson's; he performed the same useful office for Cotes, and now assisted Reynolds in the same way, though it is probable that Reynolds at this time kept all but the grounding and blocking out in his own hands. Poor Toms was with Reynolds many years, but fell into drinking habits, and died by his own hand in 1776. Of the pupils, Beach flourished in a modest way as a portrait painter in Bath and the west country, until his death in 1806. Barron, too, had some success in Rome, played the fiddle divinely, and died in London in 1791.

We thus see Reynolds escaping most of the struggles which usually fall to the lot of beginners in his or any other art, and stepping almost at once into a very lucrative practice as a portrait painter. They were no ordinary sitters who came to Great Newport Street. In his first year he painted Lord Godolphin, of the ducal house of Leeds; Lady Anne Dawson, the sister of Lord Pomfret; the two famous Gunning ladies, the Duchess of Hamilton, the Countess of Coventry; and the Duke of Marlborough. We attach sufficient importance to great station even in these democratic days, but the patronage of such people in 1753 was a very real asset indeed. The Gunnings, as

we know by their beauty and social position, exercised an influence in society almost as great as that of royalty itself. There was, no doubt, much kind influence at work in the same circles in behalf of the painter. Mason tells us that Lord Edgcumbe "persuaded many of the first nobility to sit; and he very judiciously applied to such of them as had the strongest features, and whose likeness thereof it was the easiest to hit." By this influence came the Dukes of Devonshire and Grafton to sit to Reynolds, and as the painter made very excellent likenesses of those potentates in attitudes which were simple, natural, unconventional, and withal dignified, he gained much valuable applause in a very select circle. Then in his very first year came a chance which led him to a labour of love we may be sure, and provided an opportunity for at once emphasizing the difference between his methods and ideas and those of the stupidity which was his only rival. His friend of 1749, Commodore Keppel, came to him to be painted. Keppel, as a boy of twenty-one, had been in command of the *Maidstone* frigate, had chased a larger French vessel inshore in thick weather, had followed, as he thought, the course of the chase, and had run his ship ashore. By great energy and nerve he managed to save his crew, and, after coming before a court-martial, was honourably acquitted.

Reynolds chose this incident as the setting of his portrait. He dropped all the pillars and curtains of the conventional background, placed Keppel on the seashore, alert, brisk, hand outstretched, giving orders, the very embodiment of the able young naval officer of that day, who was a very important member of the community indeed. As in all great art, the very spirit of the times appears in this portrait, and it would have been produced in no other age, whatever the genius of the painter who attempted it. The days of public exhibitions were not

as yet, and Fisher's mezzotint plate of the picture did not appear until six years later, but any of the band of portrait painters of that day who chanced to get sight of the canvas and had eyes to see, must have known that their light was soon to be extinguished by the new blaze in Newport Street. Ingenious critics have traced the attitude of this figure to a sketch from some statue in one of Reynolds's notebooks. The fact does not impress us at all, except as affording an excellent illustration of the proper method of dealing with hints gained elsewhere.

Mason tells us that Reynolds's practice increased immediately upon this fine portrait becoming known. Two young noblemen, Lord Huntingdon and Lord Stormont, just back from the grand tour, were two of the first who were attracted by it. They decided to be painted on one canvas, and as the painter displayed "merit in drawing complete figures and setting them well on their legs" in this portrait, he had a further great success. Then the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Holdernesse, happened to see this picture of the young lords, and decided to give Reynolds a sitting himself; and so the practice went rolling on like a snowball, and gathering volume as it went. But this increased practice never led Reynolds into carelessness, or to the shirking of pains necessary to get the result to his satisfaction. Northcote records indeed, that, if possible, his pains were too many.

"The evident desire which he had to render his pictures perfect to the utmost of his ability, and in each succeeding instance to surpass the former, occasioned his frequently making them inferior to what they had been in the course of the process. When it was observed to him that probably he had never sent out to the world any one of his paintings in as perfect a state as it had been, he answered that he believed the remark was very

just, but that he certainly gained ground by it on the whole, and improved himself by the experiment, adding, 'If you are not bold enough to run the risk of losing, you can never hope to gain.'"

Reynolds has left full notes which enable us to follow his technique at this early period of his career in London, a technique which some competent judges consider the best he employed, or at least the safest, for it was before he began a series of experiments in vehicles and methods, which, combined with the ignorance of cleaners and restorers, have destroyed so much of his finest work.

"For painting the flesh: black, blue-black, white, lake, carmine, orpiment, yellow ochre, ultramarine, and varnish.

"To lay the pallet: first, lay carmine and white in different degrees; second, lay orpiment and white ditto; third, lay blue-black and white ditto.

"The first sitting: for expedition, make a mixture on the pallet as near the sitter's complexion as you can.

"On colouring: to preserve the colours fresh and clean in painting, it must be done by laying on more colours, and not by rubbing them in when they are once laid; and if it can be done, they should be laid in their proper places at first, and not any more be touched, because the freshness of the colours is tarnished and lost by mixing and jumbling them together; for there are certain colours which destroy each other by the motion of the pencil when mixed to excess."

We may even follow him into the studio and see him apply these principles, in the company of the Rev. Mr. Mason, for whom the picture of Lord Holdernesse was painted, and who was allowed to accompany his lordship at each of the sittings. Mr. Mason was an amateur artist of some ability himself, and his remarks have a double value on that account.

"On his light-coloured canvas he had already laid a ground of white where he meant to place the head, and which was still wet. He had nothing upon his palette but flake white, lake, and black, and without making any previous sketch or outline, he began with much celerity to scumble these pigments together till he had produced in less than an hour a likeness sufficiently intelligible, yet withal, as might be expected, cold and pallid to the last degree. At the second sitting he added, I believe, a little Naples yellow, but I do not remember that he used any vermilion, neither then nor at the third trial; but it is to be noted that his lordship had a countenance much heightened by scorbutic eruption. Lake alone might produce the carnation required. However this be, the portrait turned out a striking likeness, and the attitude, so far as a three-quarters canvas would admit, perfectly natural and peculiar to his person, which at all times bespoke a fashioned gentleman."

Mason goes on to say that the drapery, a crimson velvet coat, painted and glazed with lake, stood perfectly well, but although the face was highly varnished, it soon faded, and the forehead cracked almost to the peeling-off point, which it would have reached had not one of Reynolds's assistants repaired it.

We glance here at the first few years of Reynolds's practice in London, the period which, in the case of the generality of men of all professions, is one of anxiety, of effort which seems without reward, of unremitting labour. Reynolds in this ordinarily disheartening period of probation must have escaped all but the unremitting labour. It will be abundantly clear before our story is finished that the life of his times may be said to have revolved about Reynolds's studio, and that during any one of the thirty-five years of his active life there was hardly a class of his countrymen which did not send representatives to

sit in his studio chair. But it is strange to find it so from the first, and yet his list of sitters bears the true representative complexion from the very year it opens in 1755.

Reynolds, as we know, was eminently the painter of pretty women, and some of the choicest of his canvases of women distinguished for their beauty date from the times we are considering. It was natural that the successful painter of Commodore Keppel should try his hand upon the ladies of that same family at Quiddenham; his group of Lady Albemarle, Keppel's mother, and her two daughters, is one of the best specimens of his treatment of feminine grace and beauty and one of the best preserved, and it was begun, at least, in 1755. One of those daughters, Lady Caroline, he painted twice later—in the loveliness of seventeen with the simple muslin kerchief and the rose at the breast, in 1758; later as the young bride of the Duke of Marlborough, whom she married in 1762.

Then there was his portrait of Mrs. Bonfoy, the daughter of one of his earliest patrons, the first Lord Eliot, painted as early as 1754, which he has never surpassed in grace and easy posing, with the green dress, the hand on hip, the head turned, and the general air of a well-bred woman, which Reynolds was the first Englishman to preserve on canvas. Another west country lady was Mrs. Horneck, the mother of the Jessamy Bride of poor Goldsmith, with a lawn veil and hair escaping down one side from under it, and her arm, with its elbow on a book, supporting her head; another still, Mrs. Molesworth, in a quaint everyday dress, literally presented with her little cap and prim apron, lawn kerchief, and without any generalizations or abstractions in the figure or its surroundings to detract from its attractive realism. The first of these three typical presentations of feminine loveliness is still at Port Eliot, in almost as perfect a state as

when it went there straight from the artist's studio; the charm of all three is familiar to thousands who have never seen the originals from the mezzotinto plates by McArdell, Purcell, or S. W. Reynolds, which to-day help to produce those amazing contests at Christie's or Sotheby's.

The most cursory glance at Reynolds's list of sitters during these years will convince the most sceptical of the all-embracing character of that list considered as an epitome of the life of the times. Here are Lord Anson, the famous circumnavigator, now Lord of the Admiralty; Admiral Boscawen, "Old Dreadnought," who swore at his first lieutenant for not engaging two French frigates between which his own vessel was discovered on a dark night before waking him for orders; Admiral Hughes; Commodore Edgcumbe; Captain Hood, afterwards the Admiral; Lord Bridport, who suppressed the mutiny at the Nore, among the sailors; the Duke of Cumberland; Lord Granby; old Lord Ligonier, the commander-in-chief; Tyrawley; Albemarle, are among notable soldiers. Lord North, with his record of maladministration with George the Third, may be denied the reputation of a statesman, but we may class him with the politicians at least, together with Charles Townshend, the witty irresponsible minister, who, with the King and a few others, helped to lose the American colonies for their country. Lord Bath we may place in a different category. He is better remembered as William Pulteney, the lifelong opponent of the bluff Sir Robert Walpole, who induced George the Second to cajole him into accepting the peerage, in order, as he said with a twist of his hand, to turn the key on him. Pulteney, one supposes, is the only peer who ever swore with rage on receiving that distinction. He dashed his patent of nobility on the floor of the House when he discovered the stratagem of his

rival, and that rival reminded him cheerfully that they were both among the most insignificant men in England. Here is the third Duke of Richmond, who, with his nephew Charles Fox, was later engaged in keeping the lamp of liberty alight against the Court and George the Third; and the Duke's sister, Lady Caroline Fox, afterwards Lady Holland, Charles Fox's mother.

High rank is well represented in Reynolds's list of sitters by the names of the young Prince George, afterwards King George the Third, by the Duke and Duchess of Ancaster, the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, and the Duchesses of Richmond and Norfolk. There is no better representative of the male fashion of that day than Lord March, one of the most famous of the bloods at White's, better known later as the Duke of Queensberry, "Old Q," the "Star of Paicadilly," the hero of the *poses plastiques*, of the milk baths, and of a hundred other disreputable stories, who expired under a shower of billets-doux at the beginning of the last century, and who was remembered and execrated well into modern times. It is quite characteristic of that noted figure that he should send one of his numerous lady friends to be painted by Reynolds, the Rena, one of "March's d—d horrid garlicky tribe," as she was described by one of the set, Gilly Williams, in pleasant allusion to the lady's family and her surroundings. "Rich frame, with an earl's coronet for Lord March," is a note relating to his lordship's portrait in Reynolds's pocket-book. George Selwyn, Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Boothby, Mr. Panton, Mr. Delaval, Mr. Shafto, and Lord Robert Bertie, were other lights of the same circle who sat for Reynolds at this time, and who represent very adequately the light-hearted young men who foregathered at White's and were already making the town ring with their proceedings at the hazard tables of that famous institution.

Reynolds at the same time painted the first of seven portraits of a lady who was a very intimate friend of many of these young men, until she bestowed her hand on Mr. Norris in 1766, Miss Kitty Fisher. This portrait is not the least agreeable of the seven, and is now at Petworth, and it represents Kitty sitting at a table and reading a letter. She lived quite near to Reynolds, over in Cranbourne Alley, and gave many sittings to the painter, not only for portraits for her admirers, but also as a model for hands, busts, nymphs, and Venuses, as Mr. Leslie thinks. That lady and her professional sisters were accepted figures in those days. King George the Second himself assisted at a plot to introduce Kitty to the great Chatham, who, however, was neither shocked nor shy, and paid some very pretty compliments to the lady. She and her friend, Bet Flint, even called on Dr. Johnson, and the doctor has left it on record that he much regretted his absence at the time. Kitty and another friend, Miss Summers, employed the Johnsonian periods with some success. Unwarrantable use had been made of Kitty's name, it appears, and she issued an advertisement beginning, "To err is a blemish entailed upon mortality, and indiscretions seldom or never escape from censure," which must have caused some amusement to the knowing ones of that day.

One feels one would like to have seen Reynolds's presentment of Sir Robert Walpole, the bluff Englishman, who ranks with the greatest of his countrymen, and for whose features we are forced to rely upon Kneller, Hudson, and such-like artists. But Reynolds came to London a few years too late, and we do not feel altogether compensated by the fact that he painted the great minister's son, the dilettante who surveyed life and art from the serene height of Strawberry Hill, the incomparable Horace Walpole. Horace was very quick to note the

advent of the new painter, and to sit for the portrait which we now know so well from the famous "eagle" print of McArdell. There was a great fuss about that same plate. Horace was in a great rage because McArdell had mentioned that he was making a plate of the great man, and threatened to remove his portrait unless the engraver locked up the plate and denied that such a thing existed.

We shall have frequent occasion to quote Horace upon the appearance of successive pictures by Reynolds. He was often enthusiastic, until he ordered a large group of his nieces, and had to pay for it, when his ardour much cooled. His first criticism of Reynolds and Ramsay, the careful but uninspired painter from Scotland, who was later to be chosen as Court painter to George the Third, much to the scandal of Mr. Wilkes, is of interest. We all know Mr. Ramsay's effigies of the King, and his plain little Queen which he turned out in scores at the Coronation. They were given as presents to ambassadors and officers of State, and confront us to-day inexorably at the old clubs and country houses.

"Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Reynolds," writes Walpole, in 1759, "are our favourite painters, and two of the very best we ever had. Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Ramsay can scarce be rivals, their manners are so different. The former is bold, and has a kind of tempestuous colouring, yet with dignity and grace; the latter is all delicacy. Mr. Reynolds seldom succeeds in women. Mr. Ramsay is framed to paint them."

It was near this time that one of Horace's relations, his beautiful niece Maria, Lady Waldegrave, one of the loveliest women of her day, sat for the painter. Reynolds painted her frequently later, both as Lady Waldegrave and as Duchess of Gloucester, when she came to marry King George's uncle. That was a great day for Horace, who was really much flattered at royalty's connection

with his family, though he professed great disapproval. There are many sly allusions in the letters of his friends to Walpole's affectation in the matter, such as "Horry is gone a progress in the country." Incidentally the marriage helped to bring about the Royal Marriage Act, which King George thoughtfully provided for any others of his family who might be inclined in the same way to marry beneath them.

It was in 1756 that Reynolds painted the first of his many portraits of Dr. Johnson—that showing the doctor pen in hand, and sitting at a table covered with books and papers. Here Reynolds reflects a very important phase of the life of his time, that famous society of which Johnson was the centre, which included many of the greatest minds of the century, and of which Reynolds himself was an important member. We may, indeed, discover representatives of nearly every class of his contemporaries in these early lists, except perhaps the most humble. These he painted, nevertheless, in his fancy subjects; beggar women sat with naked babies in their lap while he painted his Venuses, in order that his sense of colour might be quickened by the sight of their pearly flesh tints, and the children of poor parents, of porters, and paviours, were his frequent models in other work than strict portraiture.

There is a pleasant story of this period which shows that Reynolds found time, in the midst of his exacting practice as a painter, for one of those actions which are characteristic of his kindly nature. Young Mudge, the son of the Plymouth doctor, a boy of sixteen, with a post in the Navy Office, had set his heart upon visiting his father on his birthday, but was prevented by his duties. "Never mind," said Reynolds, "I will send you to your father," and accordingly painted the boy's portrait, a pleasing composition showing him peeping round a

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curtain—an idea, says one of his biographers, taken from a Dutch print. The portrait was duly presented to the doctor, though Reynolds disapproved altogether of gratuitous portraits, remarking with much shrewdness that things which cost nothing are seldom considered at their proper value by the recipients.

It is worthy of note that the almost immediate success which we have seen Reynolds attaining in his profession was accompanied by that social success which he retained from those early years to the last hour of his life. Reynolds never gave himself any unnecessary airs in consequence, but it is a fact that as time went on he became the honoured and respected associate of the best of his sitters; and that fact, in a time when classes were divided much more sharply than now, seems to speak much for his innate good breeding. This aspect of his life also receives much valuable illumination from the pocket-books, which record his private as well as his professional engagements. A whole circle of valuable friends now began to lure Reynolds away from his painting-room in the evenings, but never to the detriment of his work, we may be certain. We see that he dined often with his friends the Keppels; with Augustus, his early friend of the *Centurion;* with his brother the General, afterwards Lord Albemarle, who became, a few years later, one of the most famous of Mr. Pitt's agents in the great struggle with France; with the old lord of Quiddenham, their father, a great and open-handed gentleman, whose liberal views of hospitality and equipage left his family much impoverished at his death. Then there was a Devonian circle of his own friends. Chief among them was Dick Edgcumbe, with whom he had birds'-nested at Mount Edgcumbe, and who had seen him paint his first portrait of Parson Smart on Cremyll Beach, who succeeded his father as second Baron in 1758, and was now a great

figure at White's, and favourably regarded by old King George the Second. The Bastards and Molesworths; the Eliots of Port Eliot, just over the border in Cornwall, a family who may be regarded as among his earliest patrons, were other West country friends with whom we notice frequent engagements.

But Reynolds's acquaintance was as various as his practice, and we may think of him at this time as the intimate of representative men of many classes of his contemporaries. Among these were most of his brother artists. There was no soreness between Reynolds and the prosperous Hudson, their professional rivalry notwithstanding, as appears plainly from frequent notes of engagements with that painter. He was often in the company of Francis Hayman, the bluff disciple of Hogarth, who was much given to the genial accomplishments of that age, including the art of boxing. He early made the acquaintance of Roubilliac the sculptor, whom he later was to introduce to the great Doctor; he had frequent appointments, too, with Wilton, Cotes, and placid Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Astley, also, not as yet arrived at his prosperity, was often happy to turn to Mr. Reynolds for a small loan. "Mr. Astley, £7 7*s.*," says the pocket-book of 1755. "Do. at Cards, at Mr. Wilkes's; at Charlton; at my house;" for various sums, £12 15*s.* 6*d.* in all, and we hope that interesting gentleman paid up faithfully when the widow died.

The Mr. Wilkes mentioned in that same memorandum was the famous John, the hero of the "North Briton," the critic of the Court and of Lord Bute, the witty vagabond, who had never acted rightly in his life, until the stupidity of George the Third and his advisers provided him with a just cause and the *rôle* of popular hero, in playing which interesting part he was later to convulse the country during years. Mr. Wilkes's wife was sitting to Reynolds

at this time, while her graceless husband, as High Sheriff of Buckingham, was running through her money, and playing the part of a county magnate with her means and by her interest. It is interesting to speculate upon the attraction which the carefully ordered temperament of the painter found in the character of that tumultuous hero, but the attraction was a real one, and lasted through all the vicissitudes of Mr. Wilkes's career.

Malone tells us, as indeed is quite easy to believe in the light of the pocket-books, that Reynolds's professional engagements left little time for reading, and that he early determined to make up for his lack of study by seeking the society and conversation of the most notable men of his day. This wise determination was quite possibly the fruit in his mature character of the seeds which had been planted in the impressionable days of his youth by the enthusiastic study of Richardson's treatise. One of the maxims of that writer which he must have read and pondered over as a boy was to the effect that, "in order to assist and inform the invention, a painter ought to converse with and observe all sorts of people, chiefly the best, and to read the best books and no other." "Reynolds very early and wisely resolved to partake as much as possible of the society of all the ingenious and learned men of his own time," says Malone, "in consequence of which, and of his cheerful and convivial habits, his table for above thirty years exhibited an assemblage of all the talents of Great Britain."

Malone here hardly overstates the high character of the company in which the leisure hours of Reynolds's manhood were spent, and it may have been such considerations as Malone suggests which led the painter to cultivate the acquaintance of Samuel Johnson, who was certainly not the least eminent of his friends. They met in the very first year of Reynolds's settlement in London.

Northcote tells us that Reynolds had been much struck with the Doctor's "Life of Savage," which he had met with in Devonshire, and had been so fascinated that he stood reading it at a mantelpiece for so long that "when he attempted to move he found his arm totally benumbed." He may have mentioned this incident when, in 1753, he met Johnson at the Miss Cotterells', daughters of the admiral of that name, who lived opposite the painter in Great Newport Street, and at whose house many interesting people were wont to resort. Johnson, too, was attracted by a thoughtful remark which Reynolds made to one of those ladies. She was regretting the loss of a friend to whom she had been under many obligations, when Reynolds observed, "You have, however, the comfort of being relieved of the burthen of gratitude." The ladies were much shocked, but Johnson defended the feeling as natural, and was pleased to say that it discovered a close observation of life.

The two men again met at the Miss Cotterells', it would seem, for it was there that Johnson gave one of his characteristic exhibitions of rudeness. The Duchess of Argyll and another great lady called, and Johnson, thinking that their hostesses paid too much attention to the duchess and too little to himself and Reynolds, resented this negligence, which he suspected arose from contempt of his inferior rank. In order to emphasize this, he turned to Reynolds and said, in a tone to be heard by all present, "How much do you think you and I could get in a week if we were to work as hard as we could?"

After one of these meetings Reynolds took Johnson home to tea, and thus began an intimacy which was never suspended as long as Johnson lived. He had only recently lost his wife when he met Reynolds, and there is little doubt that their acquaintance was a great resource

in his loneliness. Reynolds himself warmly acknowledged what he owed to that friendship. "He qualified my mind," he said, "to think justly. The observations he made on poetry, on life, on everything about us, I applied to our art, with what success others must judge."

There are frequent records among Reynolds's appointments at this time of engagements with Johnson, both at his own house and in Gough Square. We know from other sources that the Doctor was a frequent caller at the painter's, where he would come unannounced, and if, as was often the case, Reynolds was engaged, the latter would leave the room without ceremony, and Johnson would stay to talk with his sister. For that lady Johnson professed great admiration, and one wonders, in the light of that intimacy, whether poor Fanny's character has not been misunderstood. We all know the playful verses in the style of the Border Ballads, just then brought in great vogue by Bishop Percy's collection, which he addressed to Fanny about his inordinate habit of asking for tea by the dozen cups. He has left it on record, too, that he thought Miss Reynolds "very near purity itself." He allowed her to paint his portrait, "Johnson's Grimly Ghost," as he entitled it, and was generally very kind to the poor nervous lady. Her commonplace book is full of very obvious sentiments recorded in the true Johnsonian periods, and there are numerous little evidences in existence which go to prove the warm feelings which animated both. Johnson tried to compose the differences between her brother and herself, and one likes to think that his good nature brought some light into the life of the poor misunderstood Fanny. Anyway, such praise as this from the great literary oracle must have caused that poor breast to flutter for once. She published privately an "Essay on Taste," of which the Doctor opined,

"There are in these few pages or remarks such a depth of penetration, such nicety of observation as Locke or Pascal might be proud of." Her brother painted Fanny, soon after the period of which we write, a profile showing a little round-faced lady in a gypsy hat, and those who have seen it pronounce the picture of "Sister Fanny" as beautiful and original. There is another portrait of her, also by Reynolds, in the Cottonian Library at Plymouth, showing a chubby and matter-of-fact-looking young woman, without any trace of suffering in her comely face.

It was soon after his acquaintance with Johnson that Reynolds took the opportunity of introducing Roubilliac to that great man. The little sculptor wanted an inscription for one of his monuments, and began beating about the bush in the fluent style of his nation. "Come, come, sir," said the Doctor, "let us have no more of this bombastic, ridiculous rhodomontade, but let me know in simple language the name, character, and quality of the person whose epitaph you intend to have me write."

Another of the intellectuals with whom Reynolds made friends at the beginning of his career in London was Lord Charlemont, the enlightened connoisseur who was one of the few to appreciate the genius of Hogarth as a painter. Lord Charlemont, as we have seen, was one of the travelling gentlemen Reynolds encountered in Rome, and they became intimate in later years. There is an amusing story told of Lord Charlemont's taste for the arts. While a bachelor he spent large sums in laying out the grounds of his country house in Ireland, which he decorated with statuary and buildings in the Italian taste. He was showing what he had done to his younger brother, the heir-presumptive to the property, who maladroitly remarked that when he succeeded he should devote the estate to more useful purposes. Lord Charlemont was

so offended that he immediately determined to marry, which he did straightway, and reared a family of children.

We thus see Reynolds, during the first years of his career, extending his acquaintance and getting into touch with many of the chief influences and interests of his time. His friends at present were of no party or political complexion; there is, indeed, little record of any strong political convictions on Reynolds's part throughout his life. But these acquaintances of his early years were destined to throw him among men of a particular party in the years of strife between the Court and Whigs which were to follow the appearance of George the Third as a political force. In the Keppels he had friends whose traditional Whig politics were determined by their connection with William of Orange and the Revolution. His intimacy with Johnson led to his acquaintance and close friendship with Edmund Burke, whose politics were certain to tinge the opinions of his friends. His friendship with John Wilkes, too, was of itself enough to stamp Reynolds as of the Whig complexion in the stormy days of that patriot's fierce contest with the Court. We take note of these early connections of the painter, not as of great importance in themselves, but as destined eventually to determine the party of a man whose interest in politics was, as far as we can tell, academic only.

CHAPTER IV

LEICESTER FIELDS

1760–1768

IN a life the chief incidents of which were the steppings from one plane of prosperity to another, and the general characteristics a steady uneventful flow of untroubled success, we note the acquisition by Reynolds of an imposing town house as an important landmark. In 1760 he was enabled to leave Great Newport Street for Leicester Square, then a fashionable quarter of the town.

The house chosen by Reynolds was that numbered 47, and on the west side, a house which, though much changed, may still be recognized in the premises of Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, the well-known auctioneers of literary and artistic wares. Leicester Square was known in 1760 as Leicester Fields, and was much affected by professional men. The character of its more noted inhabitants imparted a distinctly intellectual and artistic flavour to the square. Just opposite Reynolds, in the house which his father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, had occupied before him, Mr. Hogarth had his dwelling, with the bust of Vandyke, cut out of cork and gilded by his own hand, over the door. Other neighbours of Reynolds were Athenian Stuart, the able antiquary to the Dilettante Society, who lived at a house on the south side, where he

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made many of the drawings for his "Ionian Antiquities;" John Gwynn, the architect who built Magdalen Bridge at Oxford; Edward Fisher, the engraver, who was later to scrape upon copper some of the finest translations of Reynolds's own portraits; and John Hunter, the great surgeon and man of science. To such surroundings then, Reynolds, at the age of thirty-seven, moved with his sister and his establishment of pupils, copyists, and drapery men in 1760.

Farington tells us that he paid for a forty-seven years' lease of this house £1650, and that he spent fifteen hundred more upon repairs and alterations. These last included a gallery and studio for himself, and painting-rooms for his staff. His own painting-room was, according to Northcote, an octagonal chamber of twenty feet by sixteen. It was of a generous height, apparently, for the sill of the single square window of moderate size was nine feet four inches from the floor—a detail interesting as showing the painter's ideas of illumination. Few of these features are to be recognized in the present building, but the staircase is, or was until quite recently, intact, and displayed the iron balustrade springing in a great bow from the stone steps which came in vogue with the fashion of hooped dresses, and enabled the ladies to get their skirts upstairs with a minimum of crushing.

Leslie thinks that the removal to Leicester Square absorbed most of Reynolds's savings; but as he was shortly afterwards earning an annual income of £6000, that was not a very serious consideration. He took the occasion to increase greatly his equipage; we read of servants in silver lace, and of a great carriage, "a chariot on the panels of which were curiously painted the four seasons of the year in allegorical figures. The wheels were ornamented with carved foliage and gilding; the liveries of his servants also were laced with silver. But,

having no time himself to make a display of this splendour, he insisted on it that his sister Frances should go out with it as much as possible, which she was very averse to, being a person of great shyness of disposition, as it always attracted the gaze of the populace, and made her quite ashamed to be seen in it." Thus Mr. Northcote and we are afraid the change of her brother's mode of living added little to the comfort of the suffering Fanny.

Here Reynolds, already in the first flush of his fame, began that uninterrupted sojourn in Leicester Fields, which was closed only by his death thirty-two years later; and we may think of the painting-room we have described as the place of origin of most of the portraits by which he is remembered as an artist. Some few exceptions there are, as when he went to Blenheim a few years later to paint the family piece of the Marlborough family; but it was up those stairs that the bulk of his sitters walked, and in that room that the best of his life-work was accomplished.

His sitter's chair, we are told, was raised eighteen inches from the floor, and turned on castors, and the room was otherwise furnished with sofas. The chair passed successively through the hands of Lord and Lady Inchiquin, Barry the painter, Dr. Fryer, his biographer, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Sir M. A. Shee, and Sir Charles Eastlake, into the possession of the Royal Academy, where it may still be seen. In the painting-room Reynolds kept a portfolio of prints from his own pictures, which it was his custom to show to his sitters in order that they might choose attitudes, accessories, and the like. His palette was spade-shaped, with a handle, and without a hole for the thumb; his pencils had stocks of nineteen inches in length, and he invariably stood at his easel. These details have been preserved by Northcote, and in such circumstances the painter set himself to those thirty

years of labour with the results that we know. There are numerous remarks of his which preserve his views upon the importance to artists of that same point of labour. He often complained of idle visitors "who do not consider that my time is worth to me five guineas an hour." "The pupil in art who looks for Sunday with pleasure as an idle day will never make a painter," was another of his sayings; and he acted up to the spirit of it by consistently painting on the Sabbath throughout his career, much to the scandal of his sisters and of Dr. Johnson. Of his engagement of drapery men, who helped so much to his amazing production of portraits, he said, "No man ever acquired a fortune by the work of his hands alone." In 1764 he again raised his prices—to thirty guineas for the head, and to one hundred and fifty for the whole length; and the careful painter very wisely extracted a half-fee from each sitter at the beginning of each portrait.

The year of Reynolds's removal to Leicester Fields is most interesting in the annals of British art as that of the first organized public exhibition of pictures in England. The movement which resulted in this exhibition originated in the charity of Mr. Hogarth, who had presented to the Foundling Hospital in Guilford Street the fine portrait which he had painted of Captain Coram, its founder, his painting of "Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter," and a number of tickets in the lottery for his "March of the Guards to Finchley"—a gift which resulted in the acquisition by the hospital of that fine painting. Other artists followed Hogarth's example—Hayman, Wills, Highmore, Ramsay, Lambert, Wilson, and Pine—and the collection thus formed was thrown open to the public.

So much interest had been excited by this exhibition that the artists living in 1760 determined to repeat the experiment on a larger scale; and on April 21 they

hired, or were given, the use of a room in the Strand belonging to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures, where they exhibited seventy-four pictures, published a catalogue, for which they charged sixpence, but made no charge for admission. Among the pictures which then appeared were Hayman's portrait of "Garrick as Richard the Third;" Richard Wilson's "Niobe," well known by the excellent line engraving by Woollett; and landscapes by the Smiths of Chichester. Hogarth was unrepresented, but Reynolds sent his whole-length of the Duchess of Hamilton, the younger of the two lovely Gunnings; the threequarter-length of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, which we have already mentioned; and two portraits of men.

We may, perhaps, look forward for a few years to those early exhibitions, which seem to have many points of interest for us. The men who organized them were the forerunners of the Royal Academy—a body in which Reynolds had later a profound interest; they afford some indication of the progress of native art in Reynolds's own day, and his own contributions to them may perhaps be taken as in some sort an index to his opinion of his work, though it is possible that the exigencies of his relations with his sitters may have prevented him from always sending the portraits which pleased him most.

In the second exhibition—that of 1761—the painters engaged a room of their own in Spring Gardens, close to the entrance to the Park from Charing Cross. They enlisted the aid of no less a light of literature than Johnson to write a preface to their catalogue, to which Hogarth contributed a frontispiece and tailpiece, which hinted in very direct fashion at the want of patronage felt by the graphic arts in England. Johnson, no doubt, did all he could for the artists, but his opinions on painting may be

gathered from a passage in a letter he wrote to Baretti concerning this very exhibition—

"This exhibition has filled the heads of artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious, since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time—of that time which can never return."

The exhibition, nevertheless, was a great success, bringing together two hundred and twenty-nine works. Hogarth sent "Sigismonda" and the "Gate of Calais," now in the National Gallery; the "Lady's Last Stake," containing a portrait of Miss Salusbury, afterwards Mrs. Thrale; and other works. Wilson again contributed six of his landscapes; Paul Sandby was also represented; there were landscapes by Lambert, the scene-painter, and portraits by Dance and others.

Reynolds was represented by certainly one of his finest male portraits, and by one among his worst. To take the worst first, most people who know the National Collection will agree that the painter is ill represented by the theatrical presentation of Lord Ligonier, which is so familiar to us all, with his prancing horse, the battle proceeding in the background, the smoke and general air of melodrama. The poorness of this picture, however, is well explained by the circumstances in which it was painted. Lord Ligonier was eighty-two when he sat to the painter, and among the problems presented to Reynolds was that of making him appear twenty years younger than he was. Reynolds's great gift was to paint what he saw, and to dignify and refine it in the process. If he had presented Lord Ligonier as he appeared to him, we should doubtless have had an interesting picture of the veteran who had been fighting since he was sixteen; as it is, the laboured treatment of the face and the general air of insincerity only serve to exhibit the inability of a man of genius to achieve the impossible.

For an example of Reynolds at his best, we may turn to another picture of this same year—the admirable portrait of Laurence Sterne. The picture is at Bowood, along with many other of the painter's masterpieces; but it is familiar to many of us in the vivid mezzotinto engraving by Fisher—a small plate, but surely one of his very best translations of the great painter's canvases into the terms of ink and paper. A typical male portrait of Reynolds is this, with no energy wasted on background or accessories, but with his whole power concentrated in the face and character of the sitter before him. In looking even at the print we are in the presence of that inimitable rogue—the creator of Trim and Toby and Lefevre, the deceitful lover and bad husband, the vain, self-conscious, witty parson, the preacher of eloquent sermons, the pastmaster of the indecent jest and the *double entendre*, the very apostle of crocodile tears and false sentiment.

When Reynolds painted him, Sterne had just published the first two volumes of "Tristram Shandy," and was being flattered and petted all over the town. He produced a volume of sermons about the same time, and a few years later he was to write that curious letter in which he remarked in the most atrocious dog Latin, "I do not know what is the matter with me, but I am more sick and tired of my wife than ever." A print from this same picture seems to have graced the head of his volume of sermons. Mr. Gray, the poet, wrote to a friend in that very year, "Have you read his sermons with his own comick figure from a painting by Reynolds at the head of them?" The portrait with the wig slightly on one side certainly presents the humorous side of the divine's personality, but Reynolds preserves for us much more of that complex character. We feel that in a moment the figure may stuff its knuckles into its eyes, snuffle over some pathetic fancy, and keep at

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the same time a very sharp look-out to make sure that we were not missing a single sob.

Other portraits by Reynolds in the exhibition of 1761 were the profile of Lady Waldegrave, a whole-length of the Duke of Beaufort, and the admirable Captain Orme with his charger, now in the National Gallery.

In the following year the artists resolved to impose an admission of one shilling, with an additional sixpence for the catalogue. Johnson was again employed to address the public in a preface to explain these matters, and in so doing disclosed an ingenious scheme of the artists, which is best told in his own words.

"When the terms of admission were low," says the preface, "our room was thronged with such multitudes as made access dangerous, and frightened away those whose approbation was most desired. Yet, because it is seldom believed that money is got but for the love of money, we shall tell the use which we intend to make of our expected profits. Many artists of great abilities are unable to sell their works for their due price; to remove this inconvenience, an annual sale will be appointed, to which every man may send his works, and them, if he will, without his name. Those works will be reviewed by the committee that conduct the exhibition; a price will be secretly set on every piece and registered by the secretary; if the piece is sold for more, the whole price shall be the artist's; but if the purchasers value it less than the committee, the artist shall be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition."

A claim to distinction for the exhibition of 1762 was given by the appearance in London of one of Gainsborough's fine portraits, that of Mr. Poyntz with a gun. Gainsborough had already left Ipswich, and had begun that success in Bath which was presently to bring him

to London as Reynolds's most formidable rival. Wilson, again, is a mainstay of the collection with six landscapes, Zoffany exhibited for the first time with his portrait of Garrick in the "Farmer's Return," and men like Dawes and Gavin Hamilton, Lambert, and Wright made up the number. McArdell and Fisher both sent prints from their fine mezzotinto plates after Reynolds's portraits to the exhibition of 1762.

Reynolds was again represented by some of his finest work; he sent "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy;" Lady Elizabeth Keppel adorning a statue of Hymen with flowers; and Lady Waldegrave, as Dido, embracing Cupid.

The "Garrick" was the second portrait of that great actor which Reynolds had painted, and the idea of placing him between the figures of the two muses was peculiarly Reynolds's own. The air of half-humorous protest which he gives to the face of the little man, who looks deprecatingly at his first love in the Tragic Muse, is very happy and atones for the somewhat inadequate presentment of that lady. Cotton recorded, upon the authority of Miss Gwatkin, that Offy Palmer, his sister's daughter, sat to Reynolds for the Comedy, but as she was but five years old at the time, and had never been in London, this could hardly have been correct.

In the portrait of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, Reynolds produced one of his most sumptuous feminine portraits. Lady Elizabeth was among the lovely young women chosen to appear at the marriage of George the Third and Queen Charlotte as bridesmaid, and the painter was evidently inspired by the general interest which that great event excited. The allusion to the wedding is conveyed in the bust of Hymen and the occupation of the lady who is decorating the term with flowers, and in the flaming tripod which stands at the foot of the pillar.

The painter has certainly made the most of his opportunities. He paints the young woman in her gorgeous dress of figured satin, contrasts her pale beauty with the dark skin of a negress attendant who hands her a wreath of flowers, and gets the utmost play of colour possible out of such materials as pearly flesh, shimmering satin, flowers, jewels, and a crimson curtain. The picture is in the possession of the Duke of Bedford, whose ancestor, Lord Tavistock, Lady Elizabeth married. It is interesting to remember that the painter employed the same idea of the term of Hymen later with the same success, when he came to paint the magnificent group of the Miss Montgomeries for Mr. Gardiner, which is now a chief ornament of the National Gallery.

The exhibitions of the next few years displayed some very typical canvases of the painter. In 1763 appeared that fine male portrait of the Earl of Rothes, a year or later Lord Amherst and the Marquess of Granby, all admirable examples of his methods of presenting men. The "Granby" was painted for the Marechal de Broglie, one of the French commanders who had been discomfited by Granby's handling of the cavalry at Kirckdenkirk. It is one of the best known of Reynolds's male portraits, and was several times copied under his direction; it is the subject also of a very fine plate by J. Watson. Another famous portrait of a soldier was that of the strenuous Barré, painted in the same year, 1766, though not exhibited; Barré, the rugged soldier of fortune, the political henchman of Shelburne, the man whose claims to promotion were haughtily rejected by the stately Chatham, though the poor man pointed to the bullet in his cheek as a reason for his claims. That same bullet pulled down the lower lid of one eye and imparted a savage glare to that organ, a peculiarity of which the bloods about town made great fun, declared Barré looked

hungry and ferocious, and expressed fear at his breaking loose. Reynolds has hidden the deformity, but has preserved all the characteristics of that notable personality.

Another of the finest of his male portraits appeared at the exhibition of 1766, the admirable group of the architect Thomas Paine and his son, so graceful in composition and restrained in treatment, a picture which seems unapproachable as a presentment of the dignity of the relations of father and son associated in the practice of an honourable calling. We may add to this list of masculine portraiture during the first few years of Reynolds's work at Leicester Fields the portrait of his Plymouth friend, Dr. Mudge, the clergyman, recognizable even from Watson's print as one of the noblest of his male portraits. The doctor is in full canonicals, with his hand supporting his chin; and it is recorded that when Chantrey the sculptor came to carve the whole figure from the painting for a monument, he found that the lights and shadows on the marble fell in exactly the same positions as Reynolds had painted them on the canvas.

The feminine portraiture which Reynolds exhibited during the same years is less convincing. There is an absence at present of those delightful presentations of childhood in which he has never been approached, if we except the Miss Cholmondeley taking a dog over the stream which he sent to the exhibition of 1768. In 1763, however, he exhibited one of his many portraits of Nelly O'Brien, a lady whom we may associate in calling with Kitty Fisher. Nelly was a very frequent sitter to the painter at this time, and, no doubt, like Kitty, often served him as a model. It was in the following year that she presented one of her numerous admirers with a son, and Gilly Williams records in his humorous way,

that at the christening "the parson went so drunk that he was like to have christened the child 'Hiccough.'"

Reynolds had painted the beautiful Lady Sarah Lennox in 1761, the very year that she might have been Queen of England had she known her mind. She appears in the group now at Holland House with her cousin, Lady Susan Strangways, who was presently to elope with Mr. O'Brien the actor, and her nephew young Mr. Charles Fox coming round the corner of the house. In 1765 Reynolds again painted and exhibited this lady, who, after having rejected half a dozen young men including his Majesty, had accepted Sir Charles Bunbury as her husband. Lady Sarah's great beauty perhaps appears best in the first of these two portraits. In the second, the whole-length, Reynolds again adopted the classic manner, and represents Lady Sarah sacrificing to the Graces. Mrs. Thrale left an interesting note respecting this picture. "Lady Sarah never did sacrifice to the Graces," said she; "her beauty was in her face, which had few equals. But she was a cricket-player, and ate beefsteaks upon the Steyne at Brighthelmstone."

The portrait of his favourite sitter, Lady Waldegrave, as a widow, exhibited in 1765, is one of the finest of his feminine portraits.

We may note, in passing from the consideration of these early exhibitions, that they were the occasion of the introduction to the public of several artists afterwards well known. In 1763 George Stubbs, the man who has come to be accepted as the sportsman's painter *par excellence*, sent a "Horse," and a "Lion," and a "Zebra," and a "Horse belonging to the Right Honourable Lord Grosvenor, called Bandy, from its crooked leg." In 1767 came Mr. J. S. Copley, of Boston, New England, with a "Boy and Squirrell," who was later to paint the "Death of Lord Chatham," and the excellent "Battle of Jersey,"

now in the National Gallery, and whose son was to found the noble family of Lyndhurst. In the catalogue of the year following we notice the name of Mr. Richard Cosway, now chiefly remembered as a miniaturist. But the most noticeable figure in the opinion of that day was Mr. West, the young Quaker from Pennsylvania, who first attempted the historical style in this country, and whose pictures in the years following 1764 attracted much notice. We read of the prodigious success which his works had in that day in every respect but that of the important matter of sales. His servant gained £30 in presents alone in showing his productions to visitors to his master's studio. Great people even sent for the pictures to be carried to their houses for them to look at; they admired, and talked about the genius of the young painter, and did everything in fact for him except buy. As one of them said of one of his classical subjects, the "Continence of Scipio," perhaps, or "Pylades and Orestes," "What could I do if I had it? You surely would not have me hang up a modern English picture in my house unless it was a portrait?" So far as it relates to Mr. West, modern taste will probably agree with the wisdom of this gentleman. Mr. West, however, was happy in the patronage of the young king, who liked his well-ordered life no less than his painting, and we shall have occasion to glance at their relations on a later page.

Reynolds once remarked to Northcote, in discussing the subject of colour in painting, "There is not a man on earth who has the least notion of colouring; we all of us have it equally to seek for and find out, as at present it is totally lost to the art."

Reynolds's style of expressing himself was not always a model of clearness, and there is little doubt that he here referred to the technical part of the science of colour; the choice of vehicles and pigments, and their proper use in

the production of brilliance and permanence in painting. For it is quite certain that the sense of colour and the power of expressing it on canvas were faculties which were not denied to himself and to some others of his contemporaries, and that he must have been well aware of the fact.

Many competent artists—men like Haydon, Shee, Eastlake, and Leslie—have considered this question, have analyzed the painter's methods, and have compared the results with his recorded opinions on the subject. They seem to agree that Reynolds believed the secret of the lost art was to be found by study of the works of the old masters, and particularly of the Venetians. It is certain that soon after his removal to Leicester Fields, Reynolds began to keep detailed notes of his practice, notes which record unceasing experiments in search of a perfect method. His first practice had been to use as few colours as possible in the earlier stages of his work, and to finish with glazings of colour in transparent varnish, a method in accordance with the traditions of the Femish school, and one which had great advantages in giving brilliancy and transparency. The chief drawbacks of his first style seem to have been the general employment of fugitive pigments, like lakes, in the flesh tints, and the mixture of white lead and orpiment in the whites, which has often led to the darkening of the lights. But experts hold that his early pictures are soundly painted in the main, and they seem generally to have stood well where the precious glazings of varnish and colour have escaped the attentions of ignorant cleaners.

But his notes from 1765 onwards disclose less simple methods. "Mr. Pelham painted with lake and white," says a pocket-book of 1766, "and black and blue varnished with green mastic dissolved in oil with sugar of lead and rock alum, and Naples Black mixed with varnish."

This method, according to Eastlake, was an attempt to employ the methods which he supposed Correggio to have used in the "Leda" and some other pictures which Reynolds saw in Italy, and the varnish itself was the same in essence as one described by Ammini. Later we get notes of endless experiments and permutations in such vehicles as wax, oil, varnish, and copaiba. The use of wax, it was said, was suggested to him by the researches of some antiquary who had declared that the Greek painters largely employed it. From Reynolds's notes at this time we find that he would try wax alone on the flesh, oils on the drapery, and "finish" with dry colour in powder on the backgrounds. In 1767 we see megilp introduced, and learn that Sir John Cust's face was painted with that medium unmixed with oil. This picture has survived in good condition, as has one of Foote, in the possession of the Garrick Club, painted at the same time. Two years later, his colours were ground in oil, and applied with Venice turpentine. Later again came the use of vermilion in the flesh tints, though he had deprecated its use to Northcote, saying that he could not discover any trace of it in the colour of flesh. Later still are records of the use of wax almost alone as a medium, and the addition of yellow lake and yellow ochre to his pigments.

A tradition reported by his frame-maker, Mr. Crib, states that many of these experiments were tried upon canvases which he did not greatly value, heads of beggar men, models, and the like. In the same connection we have it upon the authority of Northcote that at this and later periods he often bought works of the old masters and deliberately removed layer after layer of the painting in search of their secret. "Speaking generally," says Leslie, "his portraits of this period are in fair preservation where they have escaped cleaners and restorers; solidly but thinly painted, and without that excess of impasto

which was later to endanger so much of his finest work."

Not the least important of Reynolds's private engagements at this period was that journey he made to his native county with Dr. Johnson soon after he had settled at Leicester Fields, in the autumn of 1762. They went by way of Winchester, Salisbury, Dorchester, the stages of the journey all being duly recorded in the pocket-book for that year. There were visits to literary friends of the Doctor, to Lord Pembroke at Wilton, to Lord Folkestone at Longford, and so on to Plymouth. Here Johnson was introduced to the Edgcumbes, to the Parkers at Saltram, and to Dr. Mudge, whom Reynolds regarded as the wisest man he had ever known. They went on to Plympton, with its sacred associations of the painter's boyhood, and there followed a stay with the married sisters at Torrington.

It is pleasant to think of that family meeting, and we can guess the pride with which those affectionate sisters welcomed the brother in his success. By all accounts the Doctor enjoyed himself hugely; he certainly displayed some of his characteristic qualities to perfection. He professed a vehement interest in local questions in order to make himself civil to a friend of the family, old Mr. Tolcher. He was equally rude to another introduced to him by Mrs. Palmer, Mr. Wicky, master of the local school, "a very intelligent, well-read man." When that lady presented him to Johnson, the latter, "in a semi-absent manner, muttered aloud, 'Wicky, Dicky, Snicky; what a name!' and, turning on his heel, went on talking to some one else." It was on this visit that he told Mrs. Palmer that he liked pancakes, but never got enough of them, and on the lady's providing a generous supply of that dish, ate no less than thirteen. He astonished, and even frightened, the natives by his consumption of the

local dainties, such as honey, clotted cream, and cider, and, to put it plainly, was on one occasion deplorably drunk. On that memorable evening there was a question of pronouncing a sentence as a test of sobriety, a test still in vogue at police stations, we believe, in which the Doctor failed miserably, and thereupon declared it was time to go to bed. The Doctor's well-known vow of abstinence dated from that evening, as we are assured. He even indulged in one of those amorous frisks which enliven at rare intervals the Johnsonian annals, kicked off his slippers on one of the Devonshire lawns, raced a young lady, and, having prevailed, led her back with much triumph by the hand. It was during this trip that Northcote as a boy first had sight of Reynolds at some public meeting, and in his boyish admiration touched the hem of the coat of the master at whose feet he was afterwards to sit.

It seems to say much for the character of that graceless Wilkes that such a man as Reynolds found so much to admire in him. Is it possible that the demagogue had depths of feeling in his character that he reserved for his intimates and concealed from all else, including ourselves, who must judge by his public record, his treatment of his wife, his atrocious writings, his dreadful pranks at Medmenham? It is certain that throughout their acquaintance there was no one of his friends whom Reynolds took more pains to meet. By the time we have reached, Wilkes had been driven abroad and was supposed to be in Paris, yet there is evidence in the pocket-books to prove that he had come back to England at the peril of his life, for a glimpse, no doubt, of that society the loss of which he so felt in his exile. In September of 1765, when he was an outlaw, and with the court braves thirsting for his blood, he was evidently lying hidden at a farmhouse up the river, and

it was Reynolds who was the confidant of his secret. "Mr. Wilks," says the pocket-book, "first to go to Teddington church, and turning to the right after passing the church, second house on the right after passing the church, Stephen, farmer and maltster, at Balston, Hampton Wick." Reynolds doubtless made the journey thus carefully noted to see his friend.

Later, when the Rockinghams came in, and Mr. Wilkes, thinking better times in store, came over to dictate terms to the Government, and talked very high about pensions of £2000 a year, it was Reynolds, as the friend of Burke representing the Government, as well as of the patriot, who persuaded that hero to return to Paris with a douceur of a few hundreds from Lord Rockingham's private purse. We think perforce of Wilkes as half demagogue, half satyr, and whole blackguard, but there must have been some other side of his character to attract the blameless Reynolds.

It was said of Reynolds that he never lost a friend except through death, and as his amiable qualities were exactly those which constantly attract new friends, it is not surprising to find his circle of intimates growing with each year of his life. Certainly the few years following his establishment in Leicester Fields saw many old ties cemented and new ones formed. His intimacy with Johnson, which originated in Great Newport Street, had never languished, and through Johnson came many notable additions to Reynolds's circle in the years we speak of. It is probable that Garrick became known to Reynolds through the introduction of their common friend, though he had sat to the painter in 1759. Edmund Burke, just now on the threshold of his political career, but engaged for the moment on his historical essays for the *Annual Register*, was another friend who came through Johnson. Johnson had made Goldsmith's

acquaintance in 1761, when he and Percy had called on the poet in Wine Office Court. Percy, who picked the Doctor up on the way, was astonished to find him in a new suit and a powdered wig. "Why, sir," explained Johnson, "I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example."

Goldsmith, though not yet famous, was just emerging from the vagabond years in which, as he himself put it, his mind had fermented like wine to leave the generous liquor of his later years, instead of the muddy and stagnant liquor which he held was the product of respectable dulness unrefined by the generous processes which he had applied so freely to his own youthful understanding. He and Reynolds, with Johnson, first met at Tom Davis's, the pompous bookseller with the pretty wife, whose beauty, it was said, used to produce audible prayers from the Doctor to be delivered from temptation, much to the delight of the husband, who was accustomed to nudge her and whisper, "That's on account of you, my dear."

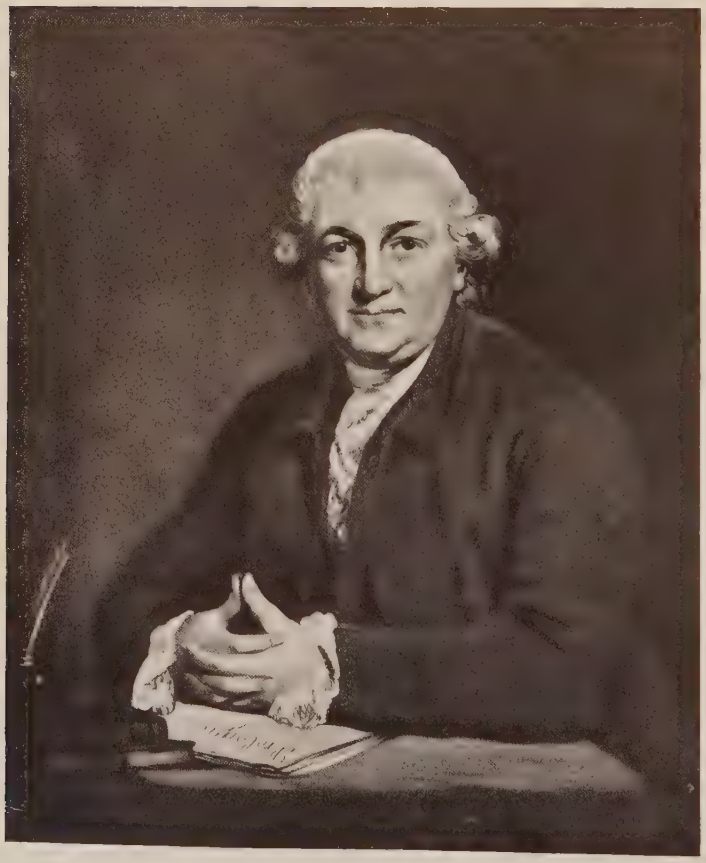
It was in 1764 that Reynolds, acting it is said on a hint from his friend Lord Charlemont, conceived a scheme of bringing these and other friends together in a society which should meet at regular intervals, and provide an audience worthy to receive the wisdom of the great man. A secondary consideration appears to have been the filtering of the quality of the company to a point which should make any two members capable of entertaining each other through a whole evening. Such was the origin of that famous club at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho, which is identified so closely with much of the leisure of Reynolds's prime, and in which the intellectual interest of the last half of the eighteenth century seems to centre.

Reynolds with his calm and tolerant temper was an ideal man to carry such a scheme to completion; it is difficult indeed to think of any other of the original members bringing the enterprise to a conclusion; it is clear, nevertheless, that the idea having been broached, Johnson himself became the controlling spirit in its organization. He was much fascinated with the proposal, and lost no time in making known his views and in carrying them into effect. He would not have Charlemont as an original, we are told, lest the club should be known as Charlemont's Club. The club was composed entirely of his own friends, and it was modelled on an old undertaking of his own—the Ivy Lane Club—which had expired some seven years earlier. He even brought into the society a survivor of that band, the pompous Hawkins, who was the only member who lacked the geniality proper to such a society. He was careful, too, to repress any unseemly confidence in aspiring candidates, even amongst his intimates. Mr. Garrick was much pleased with the projected club, and happened to say so much to Reynolds. "I like it much," said he; "I think I'll be of you." "He be of us," said the Doctor; "how does he know we will permit him? The first duke in England has no right to hold such language." And David accordingly had to wait some years outside the charmed circle until he had purged his contempt.

We all know the figures of that famed society which gathered round Reynolds and Johnson for the first time in 1764. Edmund Burke, just now in comparative ease with his pension of £300 a year on the Irish establishment the fruit of his connection with Single Speech Hamilton, was the member who alone could hold an argument with the Doctor. As Johnson himself admitted, the pair usually took opposite sides, apart altogether from their views of the merits of any particular question under

discussion, in order to make sport for the company. It was in those discussions, as we may suppose, that Burke helped to acquire that power of reasoning and expression which made him perhaps the chief debater of his time. With Burke came his father-in-law Nugent, a Roman Catholic physician in practice in town, for whom the omelette was provided at the suppers. Johnson was of course responsible for the election of Goldsmith, a kindly action towards a struggling literary man who had yet to show those proofs of genius which came later.

Two other of Johnson's friends brought a new element into the society. There was Bennet Langton, the pious, refined Lincolnshire squire, and Topham Beauclerc, the blood from White's, who linked the Turk's Head with the fashionable loungers of St. James's. There is no pleasanter figure of those days than that of the gentle Langton. He had been attracted as a youth of eighteen by reading "The Rambler," and had sought and obtained an introduction to Johnson. Later, Johnson had visited the youth at Trinity College, Oxford, and there followed a friendship which continued without interruption as long as the older man lived. Bennet Langton, though an unobtrusive is a very vivid personality to students of the Johnsonian cult, the quiet, gentle, well-bred man of the world, "the tall, meagre, long-visaged man, much resembling the stork standing on one leg in Raphael's cartoon of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes; his manners in a high degree polished," who sat at the meetings of the club nursing his knee, and was ever more ready to listen than to talk. It was to Langton that Johnson turned when he thought he was dying, and asked him to point out any particulars in which he thought his life had been faulty. Langton, in all innocence, remembering Johnson's overbearing treatment of his adversaries in dispute, produced a list of texts recommending Christian charity,



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at which the Doctor woke up, and asked in a loud voice, "What's your drift, sir?" and, as Reynolds said, the penitent turned to belabour his confessor.

Johnson had met Topham Beauclerc at Cambridge, when he went there to see Langton. The two young men, with hardly a point in common except a love of literature, were the closest of friends; Langton, a youth of the well-ordered and pious life, almost singular in the set in which he moved; Beauclerc the most accomplished rake of the same society. Johnson, the greatest moralist of his age, completed that extraordinary trio. He was fascinated from the first by Beauclerc's distinguished manner, the ease with which he expressed himself, his absolute self-possession, his power of never appearing at a disadvantage. "There is a predominance in Beauclerc's conversation one does not like," he explained, "but he is a man who has lived so much in the world that he has a short story on every occasion." The fact that the blood of the Stuarts ran in Beauclerc's veins through his descent from Charles the Second was another recommendation to the high Tory Johnson; Beauclerc's general favour in the great man's eyes, in fact, made him the only member of the Johnsonian circle who was permitted to take liberties. It was Beauclerc who when Johnson got his pension, expressed the hope that he would now purge and live cleanly like a gentleman; who lured the great man into a churchyard on Sunday in order to compare him to the Idle Apprentice, and who declared that he swam from the Hebrides to the mainland catching hold of a cow's tail. The Doctor, however, would turn occasionally at one of Beauclerc's polished sarcasms. "Sir," said he, "you never open your mouth but with intention to give pain, and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention."

Johnson's friend Hawkins completed the company—

Hawkins, the ponderous musical dilettante, the county magistrate who lamented that there were as many as fourteen crimes which a man might commit without risking the gallows; the ill-conditioned "unclubbable" Hawkins, whose life and conversation were both so well described as being one long pompous drawl. An epigram of his time, ridiculous as it is, perfectly suggests the man. "Here lies Sir John Hawkins, without his shoes and stauckins." He was pleased to look down upon Edmund Burke as an Irish adventurer, we are told, and upon Goldsmith as a bookseller's hack. It was, indeed, his rudeness to Burke which soon relieved the club of his presence. He found his reception so cold after this display that he resigned his membership.

Upon the proposal of Beauclerc, whose friend he was, Mr. Andrew Chamier was included among the founders of the club. Chamier was a stockbroker of Huguenot extraction, and had inherited, or acquired at an early age, a large fortune.

We may think of Reynolds as very constant in his attendance at the Monday night meetings of this society, enjoying to the full the good-fellowship and the genial intercourse which inspired those meetings, and are recorded so fully in Boswell's vivid pages. We shall have frequent occasion to follow him into that famous room at the Turk's Head, to observe the entry of other well-remembered figures of those times into that society; but we may think of him always as the moderator of the company, the one member of the little society with whom every other was ever on the best of terms, and who used those relations to soften the ruggedness of some of the others towards each other. The club reached its prime almost at first. Most of its members were at this time without some of the troubles and anxieties which came with later years. Johnson himself, in possession of his

pension, and with his mind at present unclouded with those apprehensions which embittered his end, was tasting affluence and comfort for the first time in his life; Burke was in like case, and as yet without those vehement passions of partizanship which were destined to impair his relations with many of his friends, and even to poison the social life of the club. Reynolds, as we know, had already touched a height of success given to few artists in any age or country; even poor Goldsmith had exchanged the early squalor of his surroundings for something like a relative prosperity. Beauclerc had not as yet shown symptoms of the cruel malady which was to carry him to the grave fifteen years later.

To trace Reynolds's social engagements from this period until the close of his life would be to write the social history of the times, and we can do no more than glance at the other engagements recorded in his pocket-books which show us how his evenings were spent. He was a confirmed devotee of that instinct of the Englishman for club life which was at that time declaring itself so convincingly, as is plain from his frequent notes of dinners at other of those societies than the Club. His acquaintance with Wilkes took him, as we find, to a dinner at the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks, which met at that gentleman's house in 1762, and it is quite possible that his name was in the list of the original members, so unhappily lost with the other treasures of the society in the fire of 1808. His acquaintance with Beauclerc no doubt accounts for his appointments at the Thursday Night Club at the Star and Garter in Piccadilly, where he played whist, very badly as was said, with Selwyn, March, Carlisle, and the rest of the bloods from Almacks, and was famous for his ceremonious politeness. In 1766, Lord Charlemont secured his election to the Dilettante Society, that renowned institution which still holds its

periodical meetings, and realizes its double object of social intercourse and the encouragement of the arts. Among the qualifications for election was foreign travel, in which Reynolds had surely graduated, though Mr. Horace Walpole, who was not a member, and, for some reason or other, never explained, was always severely censorious of the Dilettantes, was good enough to say, the real qualification was "being drunk." The Dilettantes "kept a painter," and Reynolds was later to succeed Athenian Stuart in that capacity, and to paint those magnificent groups of its members which were to immortalize his connection with the club.

A Sunday would often see Reynolds somewhere up the valley of the Thames, with Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, or Owen Cambridge at Twickenham, or with Mr. Hudson his old master, who had a villa at the same place. In 1767 there is a note "Richmond to see a house," an appointment which resulted in the acquisition of a villa of his own in that beautiful suburb. Another Sunday might see him at Nelly O'Brien's in "Park Lane near Dover Street," or dining with Chambers the architect, or with Allan Ramsay the court painter, with whom he was on intimate terms, and whom he described as "a sensible man but not a good painter."

It was in such employment and relaxations, then, that Reynolds passed the few years following his move to Leicester Fields; the uninterrupted labour of his painting-room from ten till four, and his evenings in the best and most varied society which the times afforded. The daily events of his life were the beginning of a new portrait, with the renewed resolve to make it his best, and the completion of some stately canvas in which, like most great artists, he seldom realized half of his aspirations. One searches in vain for any incident apart from his occupation in the painting-room and his generous social

accomplishments. He appears to have escaped completely the distraction which comes to most men from feminine influence. It is true that gossips at this time coupled his name with that of the pretty Angelica Kauffmann, the painter of those dainty but feeble trifles which, engraved by Bartolozzi, have so unaccountable a fashion to-day. It is certain that the painter helped the poor lady to get rid of the scoundrelly valet who had wooed and married her, masquerading in the name and the clothes of his master, Count Horne; and it is possible that the painter with forty years and more behind him may have cast a wistful glance at that pretty face. She herself was not sparing of her glances, if we are to believe Mr. J. T. Smith, who records certain tender passages between Angelica and Mr. Dance, the miniaturist, as well as with Reynolds. His niece, too, Lady Inchiquin, later recorded the fact that "she certainly set her cap at him." But the painter escaped, and with little damage, we may be sure.

We note again that Reynolds's destiny as a preordained Whig was already fulfilling itself. How could it be otherwise with the company he kept? Much had happened politically since he brought his easel into Leicester Fields. There was a brand-new young king on the throne, with very slender gifts except that of a monstrously firm will, who had determined to take his mother's advice and be a "real king," and had succeeded to that extent at least. In the assumption and playing of the *rôle* George the Third did many notable things. He frittered away most of the results of Chatham's inspired rule by the peace of 1763, for instance, and he was already in a fair way of losing the American colonies, which he duly accomplished some years later. In such enterprises he was assisted by a gang of dullards or scheming placemen, and was opposed by nearly every

man of eminence and abilities among his subjects. Among these, the Richmonds, the Burkes, and the Foxes, Reynolds had already taken his place.

In these circumstances, it was inevitable that Reynolds should find himself little indebted to the Court for patronage, though there is no evidence that George the Third had any *parti pris* in the matter. The king was throughout his life honestly suspicious of superior men, and loved to surround himself with mediocrities, and it was the most natural thing in the world that Mr. Ramsay should be chosen as the royal painter, even without the help of the influence of his countryman, Lord Bute, which was no doubt very real, just as Mr. West was called in to paint His Majesty's history pieces. The king knew Reynolds well even at this early period; he had sat to him as a boy, and Reynolds had painted his royal sister, the Princess Augusta, upon the eve of her unfortunate marriage with the Prince of Brunswick, when the poor lady wept so sorely that the painter declared he found it impossible to make any satisfactory likeness of her. But his work, which the king thought rough and unfinished, never appeared satisfactory to His Majesty, and it is probable that he believed he was patronizing the better artist when he made Mr. Ramsay painter to the Court.

In the midst of the prosperity of these years, a short but dangerous illness may have reminded Reynolds that there are limits to close application and continuous labour which it is unsafe to pass. The nature of his illness was not stated at the time it occurred, but from a remark made many years later by Fanny Burney, there is no doubt it was a stroke of paralysis, or of palsy, as it was then called. A letter from Johnson to the painter upon this occasion very happily records the relations between the pair.

"DEAR SIR,

"I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery, and therefore escaped that part of your pain which every man must feel to whom you are known as you are known to me. Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not in what state it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you, for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call my friend."

In the autumn of 1768 Reynolds made a trip to Paris in the company of Richard Burke, Edmund's younger brother, the light-hearted member of that notable family, whose name was a synonym for good-humour and ill-luck. He was Dick Burke to every one who knew him until some unfortunate speculation on the Stock Exchange changed that term of endearment to "Duck," a pleasant allusion in the slang of the Exchange to the "waddling" with which he closed the operation. Dick Burke's character is best preserved in Goldsmith's lines—

> "What spirits were his, what wit and what whim,
> Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb;
> Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,
> Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all."

The pocket-book is full of notes of this tour—of the breaking of the axletree of their carriage at Boulogne, and again at St. Just; of the Vandykes which attracted the painter at Chantilly; and of the statue of the angel writing with his finger at the Cathedral of St. Denis. At Paris they stayed at the Hotel Platier in the street of the same name, and M. Panchaud, the Englishman's

banker in Paris, apparently did the honours. One object of Reynolds's journey was the acquisition of pictures by the old masters; we read of many interviews with dealers and of much searching in shops and private collections. Reynolds managed to spend nearly five hundred pounds on the journey, and of this sum one hundred and fifty-three went for a picture by one of the Poussins. Sister Fanny was staying with a Miss Flint, a lady friend of hers, who translated some of Johnson's writings into French, afterwards married a M. de Reveral, and perished miserably with her only son in the Terror. Reynolds gave Fanny fifty pounds on this occasion. He renewed his acquaintance with many notable Englishmen in Paris at the time—with Lord Mulgrave, Lord Fitzwilliam, and others, and returned to England on November 2.

CAPTAIN ORME

CHAPTER V

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

1769–1772

DURING Reynolds's absence in Paris there had matured a scheme for the foundation of an Academy of Fine Arts in England, a project which had already agitated artistic circles at intervals during some years.

The first attempt towards the formation of such a body seems to have been made by the Dilettante Society, who, as early as 1748, had a scheme under their consideration, and one of their members, Mr. Dingley, then put into writing some particulars of the proposed undertaking, which, however, came to nothing. In 1753 the artists who were accustomed to meet at the drawing-school in St. Martin's Lane, had proposed a similar scheme to themselves. In November of that year they attended a meeting at the Turk's Head, in response to a circular issued by Francis Milner Newton, "to proceed to the choice of thirteen painters, three sculptors, one chaser, and two engravers; to make regulations; take in subscriptions; erect a building; provide for the teaching; and otherwise act in setting on foot a public academy for the improvement of the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture." Reynolds was included among the artists addressed; but the enterprise again came to nothing.

In 1755, however, it was revived by the same body of artists, who, in again taking up the matter, seem to have remembered the efforts of the Dilettante Society with the same object, and now approached that body with a view of joining forces in the undertaking. The artists addressed the society by means of a paper, which is believed to have been the work of Reynolds, and, in any case, presents some interesting points.

The writer begins by pointing out the general advantage to any community of the practice of and taste for the fine arts, and goes on to bewail their neglect in England. He touches, among other points, upon the evils of the prevailing taste for "things foreign," and especially upon the blighting influence of the false connoisseurship which resulted from the importance of the grand tour in the scheme of every gentleman's education.

"The prodigious sum England has laid out at foreign markets for paintings is but a trifle to the more prodigious sums expended by English travellers for the bare sight of such things as they despaired of ever seeing at home. But the loss of money is not so much to be regretted, perhaps, as the loss in point of character; for in this one particular, at least, we voluntarily yield the palm to every petty state that has happened to produce a painter, and by the language generally used on this subject by our own countrymen, as well as by others, one would think this was the only country in the world incapable of producing one; as if the genius of a painter was one kind of essence, and the genius of a poet another; and as if the air and soil which have given birth to a Shakespeare and a Bacon, a Milton and a Newton—names which the proudest writers of the Continent dare not mention without a note of admiration — would be deficient in any species of excellency whatever."

The writer then lays it down that patrons, whether

priests or princes, have always given spirit to art, and have caused an emulation among painters to share their rewards. His theory of connoisseurs, too, is ingenious. Collecting had helped to create the very deficiency in native art which the connoisseurs decried. In order to justify the great prices these gentlemen paid for foreign pictures, they were led to under-estimate native art, and treat its professors with contempt. "And as collection often produces a tasteless connoisseur, and connoisseurs are alone accepted as judges, it must follow that a painter, like a Catholic saint, will never be beatified until a century after his death, nor canonized until a century later—no very powerful incentive."

It seems very probable that Reynolds was the author of this address. Its sentiments certainly are those which he often expressed upon the prevailing taste; its style is similar to the discourses which he afterwards delivered at the Academy; and the views in the opening part have an obvious ring of Richardson's Treatise—a work which greatly influenced his theories upon art.

The practical suggestions of the address contemplated an institution of a comprehensive character not unlike a combination of the present Royal Academy, of the Kensington Schools of Art, and the Arts and Crafts Society. It included schools of painting and sculpture like those afterwards established by the Academy, schools of decorative design, affiliated schools in the provinces, "the purchase of specimens of tasteful and elegant manufactures," and annual exhibitions.

The King was to be asked to be patron, and the governing body was to consist of a President, elected for life, a Vice-President, and thirty directors elected for three years by the Society, whose ordinary members were to form the elective body called "Fellows."

Francis Hayman was the chairman of the committee

of artists from which this proposal emanated—a committee which included most of the artists alive at that time, some, indeed, whose names survive only in the list. The notable exceptions were Hogarth, Adam and Chambers among the architects, and the mezzotinto engravers.

This scheme was again doomed to failure. The Dilettante Society approved the plan generally, but laid down conditions which proved unacceptable to the artists. The Society proposed to choose the President from its own ranks; all its members were to be *ex-officio* members of the new body, though only twelve were to have votes; all artists were to be eligible as members, but their votes were also limited to twelve, chosen annually by their Fellows. There followed some negotiations between the Society, represented by a Colonel Gray, and the artists, but the whole subject at length dropped.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, the artists, following the example of the exhibition at the Foundling Hospital, had instituted exhibitions of their own, and had already held those we have noticed at the Strand and at Spring Gardens. The dissensions, however, which seem invariably to follow any association of men engaged in intellectual occupations, had already occurred among them. When, after the first year, the exhibitions were moved from the Strand to Spring Gardens, a discontented remainder, calling themselves the Free Society of Artists, stayed at the old quarters, later removed to a room in Maiden Lane, later still to Mr. Christie's auction-room in Pall Mall, last of all to St. Alban's Street, where they expired in 1775. The Spring Garden society, however, progressed from strength to strength. In 1765 they were incorporated under Royal Charter as the "Society of Artists of Great Britain," and assumed arms "upon a field azure, a brush, a chisel, a pair of compasses

composed fretty or; over them, in chief, a regal crown proper," with Britannia and Concord as supporters. The Society included most of the notable artists of the time, excepting, however, Ramsay and Reynolds himself, though, as we know, he exhibited regularly.

It was from the dissensions of this Incorporated Society of Artists that the Royal Academy eventually sprang into existence. The constitution of the Society provided for the election of twenty-one directors, but was not very clear in showing how to get rid of them. The outsiders revolted against the retention of office by these gentlemen, which, though no doubt inconsiderate, was undoubtedly justified by the charter. The whole Society was rent by cabal and intrigue arising out of this dispute, which eventually disgusted most of the reasonable men belonging to it. Some of these seceded, and decided to form a society of their own, with the King himself as patron. Reynolds took no part in the movement, probably because the King's obvious preference for Ramsay rendered his own prominence in the matter undesirable; possibly, also, because Joshua Kirby, the president of the Incorporated Society, was instructor in perspective to His Majesty. It was while he was away in Paris, that Chambers, West, Cotes, and Moser drew up an outline of a scheme for an academy, and approached the King with a petition that he would place himself at its head as patron. His Majesty was very propitious, consented to act as patron at once, graciously considered the details of the artists' scheme, shrewdly struck out the names of a proposed body of patrons whom he perceived would not assist the painters in managing their own business, and himself, as it would seem, named the officers and as many as thirty members of the new body.

Much elated at their success at Court, the artists

called a meeting for December 9, and sent Penny and Moser hot-foot to Reynolds, who was just home from Paris, to secure his attendance. They found him coy, and were unable to extract his promise to be present. It would seem that Mr. Kirby, anxious for his own society, had been at the pains of seeing Reynolds, and of assuring him that there was no truth in the rumour of the new Academy having secured the patronage of the King; and such an announcement from his Majesty's tutor in perspective no doubt appeared conclusive. West, as *persona grata* with the King, was then sent to Reynolds by the artists, and at length convinced him by the assurance that not only were the rules framed, but that the King had nominated the officers of the new body with Reynolds at their head as President. Reynolds's fears as to the unauthoritative nature of the movement being at length relieved, he consented to accompany Mr. West to the meeting of the artists, which was about to break up when the pair arrived. Upon the appearance of Reynolds a burst of satisfaction was manifested by the meeting, the code of rules was read, a report of the proceedings was submitted to His Majesty on the following day, December 10, who finally sanctioned them, and the Royal Academy of Arts, thus founded, held its first general meeting on the 14th of the month.

Here, then, was Reynolds, at the age of forty-five, acknowledged by his fellow-artists as the head of their profession, and distinguished by the King as the official representative of art in England. It is clear that the artist did not seek the distinction; it is equally clear that the King's preferences lay elsewhere. One likes to think that this was one of the many occasions on which George the Third acted conscientiously and did his duty in spite of his own personal feelings. He no doubt recognized in Reynolds the personality best fitted to preside over the

GARRICK BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY

ignified body which was contemplated in the new Academy. Let us reckon it to his credit that the friend of Wilkes and Burke, as well as of Johnson, found favour in the royal eyes at this time.

The affairs of the new Academy found much employment for Reynolds during the early part of 1769. There were matters of moment still awaiting settlement with the Incorporated Society of Artists, for instance—a body which felt much aggrieved at the success of the new movement. The Academy was virtually founded by the directors of the Society who had been dismissed from their offices by a vote of the malcontents, and there was doubtless ample opportunity in the circumstances for display of personal feeling; anyway, there was sad trouble between the old Society and the "Junto," as they were pleased to christen His Majesty's new Academy. The new body had pitched upon very modest quarters at Mr. Dalton's print warehouse in Pall Mall. Mr. Dalton, we are assured, had found "the speculation of these premises heavy on his hands, and, having vainly tried to get them to the Society of Artists, had joined the seceders, and eventually procured them as tenants." The rooms subsequently were notable as those of the eminent Mr. Christie, the auctioneer.

To Dalton's room accordingly were sent the casts originally belonging to Sir James Thornhill, and presented by his son-in-law, Hogarth, to the old drawing-school in St. Martin's Lane. To Dalton's also went another collection of casts which had been given by the Duke of Richmond to the Society some years before. The duke had thrown open his great house in Whitehall to artists, and had provided these casts for their use. He had promised also premiums and prizes, but having gone to the wars with his regiment, he had neglected to provide these, and upon his return had found insulting papers

stuck upon his doors alluding to the matter, whereupon he had closed the school and presented the casts to the Society. The Society now made a great to-do about these casts, declared that Moser and Dalton had assisted the Junto in tricking them out of their possession, and went through the empty form of expelling the eminent men who had long seceded from their ranks. They now opened a private academy of their own in Maiden Lane over the Cyder Cellar, and petitioned the King for his patronage and support. His Majesty stoutly said that he would no more encourage one set of men than another, and that he would visit the exhibitions of both, which he accordingly did.

These and many other matters connected with the business of the Academy occupied Reynolds very fully during the first half of 1769. The first exhibition of the new body was fixed for April, and Reynolds spared neither time nor labour to make it a success. It opened on the 21st of that month. The President himself sent portraits of the Duchess of Manchester and her son, as Diana and Cupid, and of Mrs. Blake receiving the cestus from Venus. The pictures are neither of them favourable specimens of his work, even apart from the mistaken classical conception of the design. The portrait of Miss Morris as Hope nursing Love is a more pleasing subject, well known from the engraving. It is a graceful composition, but the incident of an unmarried girl giving suck to a child seems strange to our modern ideas.

Reynolds was certainly happy, however, in sending the lovely group of the two friends, Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe—Mrs. Crewe, the famous Whig toast, the friend of Fox and Burke and Sheridan, and of all that was eminent on the Whig side. This lady had a great attachment for Mrs. Bouverie, the daughter of Sir Edward Fawkener, and the two are painted in a garden with a

omb bearing the motto, "Et in Arcadia ego," an idea aken from a picture by Guercino. It seems that Dr. ohnson, going over the exhibition during its arrangement, eized upon this motto for criticism. "What can this nean?" said he. "It seems very nonsensical, 'I am in Arcadia.'" "Well, what of that?" replied Reynolds, "the King could have told you. He saw it yesterday, and aid at once, 'Oh, there is a tombstone in the back-round. Ay, ay, death even in Arcadia.'"

Gainsborough sent his portrait of Lady Molyneux o the exhibition. Although that artist was reckoned mong the original academicians and was described as .A. in the catalogue, he appears to have appreciated the onour very little, and to have taken little interest in its roceedings, except to grumble at the places given to his ictures. Dance sent portraits of the King and Queen; Ione a "Piping Boy;" Cipriani an "Annunciation," ngelica Kauffmann and West the usual classicalities. he exhibition was a great success, and it is worthy of note hat the stream of silver which was first turned into the cademy coffers in 1769, and still flows so copiously in ur own day, produced the not inconsiderable sum of 700, all except one half-crown.

Northcote tells us that the pictures we have named rew the greatest attention. Mr. West especially was in reat favour. He was from the first in prodigious good dour in high places. The dignified clergy liked much e piety and purity of the young painter from the colonies, nd George the Third was always attracted by the me virtues. Drummond, the Archbishop of York, com-issioned Mr. West to paint a picture of "Agrippina nding with the ashes of Germanicus," and, on seeing the etch, not only encouraged the young man to proceed, ut in his enthusiasm started off to get a subscription of 3000 in order that this phœnix among painters might

be able to devote his genius to the painting of history undisturbed. The subscription failed, but the Archbishop went straight to His Majesty at the next levée, and related the story of the devout young Quaker from Pennsylvania. "Send him here with his picture," said His Majesty in effect. West went accordingly to the palace with Agrippina. George called in his Queen to admire the piece, explained the argument to Her Majesty, and not loth, as we may suppose, to air his classics, commissioned Mr. West to paint "Regulus" for him upon the spot. "The Archbishop," said His Majesty, clearing his voice, "made one of his sons read 'Tacitus' to Mr. West. I will read 'Livy' to him myself," and the book is sent for accordingly, and His Majesty rolls out the passage, construing for Mr. West's benefit with great relish.

We mention this little incident because it illustrates very clearly the King's taste in art and his attitude towards artists; also because it was, in a way, an event which was ominous of the end of the new Academy's rivals, the Incorporated Society of British Artists. Mr. Joshua Kirby, the King's teacher of Perspective, who had tried to induce Reynolds to hold aloof from that body, was present when Mr. West's picture of Regulus duly arrived. He praised the piece, and hoped that His Majesty would graciously allow his subjects to see it at the exhibition. "Certainly," replied the King. "At the exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists," suggested Mr. Kirby. "No, no, no," replied His Majesty; "at the exhibition of my own Academy." We are told that poor Kirby never recovered from the shock of the mortification. He died soon after, absolutely crushed by what he considered the withdrawal of the royal patronage from the society of which he was president.

Richard Dalton, His Majesty's own Librarian, was Antiquary to the Academy; Dr. Johnson, Professor of

ncient Literature; Goldsmith, Professor of Ancient istory—an honour which he mentioned ruefully was to im like "ruffles to a man who had no shirt." A little ter, another of the Johnsonian circle, Baretti, was made oreign Secretary to the Academy.

The artists who looked after the first pupils of the cademy were Carlini, Cotton, Cipriani, Dance, Hayman, oms, West, Wilson, and Zuccarelli. Reynolds himself ook no part in the routine of teaching, but confined his fforts to the delivery of those discourses on art by which e is chiefly known as an author. We shall have occasion o examine these discourses altogether when we come to eview his life's work; here we may say that his first ddress, delivered on January 2, 1770, was a not unfavourble specimen of dissertation suitable for the opening eremony of such an institution as the Academy. We re told that its delivery was not impressive; that eynolds had a horror of all rhetoric and acting, and hat his deafness and distaste for anything even approachng affectation resulted inevitably in a dull and level tyle of elocution. Shee said that the mutilated lip had a istinctly detrimental effect upon his delivery, which was o doubt the case. But the academicians were mightily leased with the address, and voted their thanks to the resident at their first meeting on January 17. The ccasion was celebrated by a dinner at the St. Alban's avern, where Reynolds presided, and Mr. Vernon the ctor sang "good old Mr. Hull the comedian's verses, hich declared—

> "'The arts unrivalled shall remain
> While George protects the polished train.'"

A few months later, on April 21, at "12 1/2," as the ocket-book records, Mr. Reynolds left Miss Norcliffe, hom he was painting, jumped into his chariot, drove

down St. James's Street to the Palace, received the accolade from His Majesty, and returned as Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight, to take up his pencils and paint Mr. Simons, who was waiting for him at 2 p.m.

It is curious to find that the first years of Reynolds's Presidency of the Academy, a position in which he was accepted as the head of contemporary art, were not those of his greatest artistic activity, and that from some reason or other his list of letters during those years is relatively a short one. The prominent men of those days especially failed to attend his painting-room in their wonted numbers. It is possible that the distractions of the time filled the heads of these gentlemen with other thoughts than of having them painted on canvas. Those were the days of the final struggle between George and the Whigs, in which the King was to prevail; the days of Wilkes and the Middlesex election, of the Bill of Rights, and of Junius and his amiable supervision of public affairs. Amid the distractions of these high matters, the men for the most part kept away, and left their ladies and children to come to Leicester Fields. Reynolds, too, may have been willing enough to relax the arduous labours of his earlier years. In any case, the social character of the appointments in the pocket-books grows more pronounced, the professional less. Not that a record of continuous work is wanting, but that it is of a less strenuous and absorbing nature than formerly. Reynolds, too, may have had to reckon in some measure with the competition of young Mr. Romney, who a few years previously had left his wife and children in the north and started on that career in which he was never to see them until, broken-hearted, he turned again to that shelter, when all else had failed him. Romney, at a cheaper rate and with the attraction of novelty, may have diverted some of Reynolds's sitters, though the real competition

rom that painter was to come later, when he had returned rom his visit to Rome.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, as a newly made knight of George the Third, and as President of His Majesty's Royal Academy, no doubt concluded that some little cknowledgment of his office from the King was no more han his due. We may assume so much from an incident ecorded by Sharp in a letter to Garrick in the year of he foundation of the Academy. Leslie says that a commission from the King to paint himself and the Queen ad not been graciously offered, but granted only on the equest of the painter. If Mr. Sharp is accurate in his acts, this no more than states the case. "The President Reynolds, I am told," says Sharp, "has desired to resign, ut the King sent for him and insisted upon his continuing. Reynolds returned that he owed His Majesty the duty of subject, but no more, and that, as His Majesty had never at to him as he had to many others, he desired to adhere o this resolution. The King then said he would sit to him." The commission followed accordingly, which took Reynolds at intervals to St. James's during the next two years.

In the exhibition of 1770 appeared one of the first of hose presentations of infant life which are such an important part of his work, one of the two pathetic pictures of the Babes in the Wood. The paintings were the product of the leisure which we may suppose was afforded to Reynolds by the falling off of his sitters. We learn from Northcote that it was his practice to send any picturesque beggar, man, woman, or child, whom he might meet in the street, to his house, to await his leisure in a lower room. In the intervals of his appointments with sitters he would have one of these models to sit for him in the painting-room for a fancy picture; the duchess would ail out of that apartment and the beggar child from Soho, or the brawny paviour with the pathetic face, would

take her grace's place in the painting-chair. Among such humble sitters was a very favourite model of Reynolds, the boy who afterwards appeared in the well known picture of the Infant Samuel. This poor boy was an orphan of the age of thirteen, whom Reynolds had found in the streets. At that tender age he was supporting himself and two or three younger brothers and sisters by making cabbage nets, and he imparted the mysteries of that humble craft to each of the poor youngsters as they grew old enough to learn it. We may be sure that this family of outcasts benefited greatly by their contact with the gentle Reynolds.

We shall see Northcote at work in the next room in the course of a year or two, a situation which enabled him to report much of interest that went on in the master's sanctum. He would hear a child's voice say "Sir, sir, I'm tired." There would be a little movement; and another half-hour of silence followed by another plaintive, "Sir, I'm tired." Then, perhaps, the little one would fall asleep, and in so enticing an attitude that the painter would quietly put away the canvas he had been working upon, take a fresh one, and hastily sketch in the figure of the sleeping innocent. A change would perhaps take place in the attitude of the child, the painter move his easel to accentuate the difference of pose, and paint in the second figure, and the result of these sittings and the imagination of the painter would be one or other of those presentments of the nursery legend, with its leaves and robins and its matchless preservation of the beauty of innocent childhood.

Reynolds sent several portraits to the exhibition of 1770—Lord Sydney and Colonel Acland as archers; Mrs. Bouverie; little Miss Price as a shepherdess; one of the many portraits of Johnson; one of Colman; and the admirable head of Oliver Goldsmith.

MRS. ABINGTON

The last appeared in circumstances of some interest. On May 26, near the end of the exhibition, after many postponements, the "Deserted Village" was published. The town recognized the touching beauty of that poem on the instant, and called for five editions before the summer was over. The dedication of the work bore witness to the friendship between Reynolds and the poet. "The only dedication I ever made," wrote Goldsmith, "was to my brother, because I loved him better than most men. He is since dead; permit me to inscribe this poem to you."

Reynolds's portrait carries its own dedication to Goldsmith; none but the friend who knew and loved him could have suggested on canvas so much of the tenderness, the pity, all but the vanity of that lovable character, or hinted so delicately at the sorrows by which his life was beset. In the poem and the picture which thus appeared together we have an epitome of the poet's life. There is possibly no other poem in the language in which the character of the author appears with such artless, such touching candour. In all these years of struggle with debt, with contumely, with his own weaknesses and frailties, the poor fellow was for ever dreaming of the place where his childhood was spent; and in the lines which we know so well he expresses the hope, never fulfilled, of revisiting Auburn to share the prosperity, which never came, with the hungry and dependent. The painting completes the story. This is the homely face, unflattered by a single line, of the man who, when in distress, and even in want, would give away his last shilling to any poor outcast he thought was in greater need of it than himself; but a face dignified by the infinite tenderness of its owner's character.

It is pleasant to know that the poet recognized the merits of this fine portrait. He was much flattered by

the public interest which was excited by the simultaneous appearance of the book and the picture. He wrote to his brother Maurice, and awaited Marchi's engraving, published later in the year, with much interest. "I shall shortly send my friends over the Shannon some mezzo-tint prints of myself;" and when he met one of his old pupils, he said, "Have you seen the print of me, after Sir Joshua Reynolds? Not seen it? Not bought it? Sure, Jack, if your picture had been published, I'd not have been without it for half an hour."

We see the result of the falling off of sitters in the subjects of many of the pictures Reynolds sent to the exhibitions of these years. In 1771, for example, he only exhibited three portraits. The most noticeable of these was the Saltram picture of Mrs. Abington, now belonging to Lord Hillingdon, representing that lady as Miss Prue, with her arms on the back of the chair, and her finger placed archly on her lips, which Walpole noticed as "easy and very like." There was the charming half-length of his niece, Offy Palmer, reading "Clarissa Harlowe," still in possession of the Gwatkin family, which appeared in the catalogue as "A Girl Reading." The little Miss was much hurt at that title, as we are told. "I think," she said, "they might have put 'A Young Lady.'" The other portrait was that of an unnamed gentleman. The remaining pictures, however, indicate the character of much of Reynolds's work at this period. There was the Venus chiding Cupid for learning to cast accounts; a Nymph and Bacchus; and a study of an old man, which afterwards served as material for the Ugolino.

In the following year, 1772, however, Reynolds is again strongly represented by excellent portraiture. Mrs. Crewe as St. Geneviève, with its pathos expressed rather by the attitude than by the face partly hidden by the hand, its lambs and suave landscape, is one of the loveliest

of his feminine portraits. Mrs. Carrington, too, as St. Agnes, represents very adequately the painter under the influence of Guido. For those who like him in the classic mood, there was Miss Meyer as Hebe moving up a rainbow footpath, with the eagle armed with a whole clawful of thunderbolts. As a complete contrast to these graces were the manly presentments of Robertson the historian and Goldsmith's friend, Hickey the attorney.

Those two same exhibitions of 1771 and 1772 were notable in different ways; the first for the appearance of Barry's first exhibited picture of "Adam and Eve," the last by the excitement which attended the appearance of West's "Death of Wolfe." We shall have something to say about Barry when we come to examine his later relations with Reynolds; here we may note that his "Adam and Eve" was the outcome of his brave resolution to paint his ideals. "Oh," he wrote, on leaving Rome for London, with the scheme of this same picture in his mind, "I could be so happy on my going home to find some corner where I could sit down in the middle of my studies . . . to paint this work." The poor fellow found the corner somehow, but not the happiness; it will be charitable to remember the courage with which he followed his own honest convictions, when we come to consider some less admirable qualities which he displayed later.

The very rumour that Mr. West was about to paint a historical piece with its characters in their habits as they lived caused a mighty flutter in the artistic dovecotes of 1771. There was a prodigious wagging of heads and running to and fro when it was announced that the painter, secure in his modest pension from the King, was going to attempt Wolfe yielding up the ghost on the Heights of Abraham in his general's uniform, and surrounded by his staff, similarly clad. Archbishop Drummond ran off to Reynolds, and the pair ran to Mr. West

to dissuade him from running such a risk. "Reynolds," says West himself, in his autobiography, "began a very ingenious and elegant dissertation on the state of public taste in this country, . . . and concluded by urging me earnestly to adopt the costume of antiquity as more becoming the greatness of my subject than the modern garb of European warriors." I answered that "the event to be commemorated happened in the year 1758, in a region of the world unknown to Greeks and Romans, and at a period of time when no warriors who wore such costume existed. I wanted to mark the place, the time, and the people, and to do this I must abide by truth."

One's heart warms to the excellent West in reading those honest sentiments, and forgives him the acres of bad canvases which he turned out during the next quarter of a century for his brave revolt against the conventions of the grand gusto.

He went boldly to work in his own way with his "Death of Wolfe," in spite of Reynolds's "elegant dissertation," and when it was finished the painter and the archbishop again came together to see it. "Reynolds seated himself before the picture, examined it with deep and minute attention for half an hour, then, rising, said to Drummond, 'West has conquered; he has treated the subject as it ought to be treated. I retract my objections. I foresee that the picture will not only become one of the most popular, but will occasion a revolution in art.'" The incident seems creditable to both painters, and we can be grateful to West for a picture which made way for some excellent pieces from other hands which have followed it: Mr. Copley's spirited "Battle of Jersey," now in Trafalgar Square, for example. His Majesty had heard of the debate, and had apparently wavered in his own view of the matter. "I wish I had known all this before," he said, "for the objection has been the means

of Lord Grosvenor getting the picture, but you shall make a copy for me;" which Mr. West did accordingly, with another for General Monckton, one of the actors in the tragedy.

By way of testing the other theory, Barry, who was certainly West's superior as an artist, essayed to present the same subject in 1776, but with Wolfe and his lieutenants in a state of nature, and with very indifferent success, as may be imagined.

The exhibitions of the Academy continued at the room in Pall Mall, but the schools and headquarters were removed in January of 1771 to a wing of the old Palace of Somerset House which had been added by Inigo Jones. On April 23 Reynolds presided over the first of those annual banquets which have since become events of such public interest. Here, in 1771, came twenty-five guests chosen from men in great place or eminent in the society of their time. It was at this banquet that Johnson laughed at Goldsmith's praise of the Rowley poems, and that Horace Walpole first learned of the suicide of the hapless Chatterton.

In October, 1769, a well-known member of the Johnsonian circle, Baretti, the studious Italian, lay in deadly peril in Newgate on a charge of murder. He had been molested by some outcast in the Haymarket, had repulsed her, and had been attacked by her bullies. The short-sighted foreigner had drawn a small knife in self-defence, and, more by accident than design, had given one of the ruffians a blow from which he died. Baretti came before Sir John Fielding, and was committed for trial. A few days later Reynolds, Johnson, Fitzherbert, and Garrick were accepted as bail, and they and others of Baretti's friends attended at the Old Bailey to bear witness to his character. He was acquitted, though it seems there was no foregone conclusion to that effect, for Johnson and

Burke, according to Mrs. Piozzi, both urged him, while in Newgate, not to be too sanguine that he would escape.

There were one or two humorous incidents connected with Baretti's danger which must have amused his friends when the danger was passed. When they attended at Lord Mansfield's on the question of bail, that great man, by way of impressing Garrick and of shining in a subject with which he was little acquainted, airily put aside the question for which they had met, and "very abruptly began with some very flimsy and boyish observations on the contested passage in *Othello*, 'Put out the light.'" We can imagine Garrick being much flattered; but Reynolds was certainly not impressed, and was grievously disappointed at finding "this great lawyer so little at the same time."

While Baretti was still in prison awaiting his trial, he received a call from one of his countrymen, who solicited a letter of recommendation for taking over Baretti's own pupils as soon as he should have been hanged. "You rascal," replied Baretti, "if it were not in my own apartment, I would kick you downstairs directly!"

To this time, or a little earlier perhaps, belongs the story related by Northcote of Reynolds's horror, upon reading the report of the Old Bailey Sessions, to find that a wretch had been condemned for robbing his own servant, the negro whose effigy appears in the well-known portrait of Lord Granby. He at once sent for this servant, and learned that after he had taken Mrs. Williams, Dr. Johnson's blind pensioner, home one evening to Bolt Court, he had been locked out at Leicester Fields, and had taken refuge at a neighbouring watch-house. Here he had been robbed of his watch and money. Unknown to any of Reynolds's household, his assailant had been committed, tried, and condemned to death. Sir Joshua's kind heart was struck by the horror

MISS KENNEDY

of this tragedy, sent his servant, Ralph Kirkley, at once to Newgate with clothes and food for the prisoner, and never relaxed his efforts until Burke's interest had secured the commutation of the death-sentence to transportation for life.

In September of 1770 Reynolds wrote to his friend Sir Charles Bunbury at Barton—

"DEAR SIR,

"I have finished the face, very much to my satisfaction; it has more grace and dignity than anything I have ever done, and it is the best coloured. As to the dress, I should be glad if it might be left undetermined till I return from my fortnight's tour. When I return, I will try different dresses. The Eastern dresses are very rich, and have one sort of dignity; but 'tis a mock dignity in comparison of the simplicity of the antique. The impatience I have to finish it will shorten my stay in the country. I shall set out in an hour's time."

The incident to which this letter relates is very typical of the times, and illustrates Reynolds's connection with some of the less regular phases of the life of his day. He wrote to Bunbury about a portrait he was painting of Polly Kennedy, the beautiful Irish girl, who was a particular friend of Bunbury himself, the St. Johns, Lord March, Lord Robert Spencer, Selwyn, Lord Palmerston, and Heaven knows how many other of the modish lights of that day. Polly's history is well known to students of the social history of that happy period. She had two brothers, Matthew and Patrick, who by their sister's help had risen to something like terms of intimacy with her gentlemen friends. In February, 1770, the pair lay condemned to death for the murder of one Bigby, a watchman, who was killed in some drunken brawl at

Westminster. The sentence had been passed on a Friday, and on the Monday they were to make the journey to Tyburn.

But in the short interval between these days their devoted sister had set the whole fashion and influence of the town in motion to save them; the King was petitioned and besieged by the ladies of the Court, and the Secretary of State beset by all his acquaintance and friends. By these efforts a respite was obtained, and it was later decreed that Patrick should be executed, and Matthew transported to Maryland.

The affectionate sister refused to rest satisfied with this decision, though each day made her task the harder, for Widow Bigby had appealed against the reprieve, and the Society of the Bill of Rights, at that time arrayed against the Government, took sides with the widow against the Court and the quality and poor Polly Kennedy.

On May 29 Matthew Kennedy again stood at Bow Street, on the appeal of the widow, and was again committed for trial. Meanwhile the Bill of Rights Society clamoured for the blood of both brothers, and Junius improved the occasion in a characteristic letter. On June 15 the brothers were brought before Lord Mansfield a second time, but a flaw in the pleadings led to another adjournment, and it was not till November that the trial was resumed. Meanwhile the tears and entreaties of Polly had prevailed, and the widow was bought off.

"When she went to receive the money (£350) she wept bitterly, and at first refused to touch the coin that was to be the price of her husband's blood. But being told that nobody would receive it for her, she held up her apron, and let the attorney who was to pay her sweep it into her lap."

One of the brothers was transported for life; the

other, who had been twice ordered for execution, for fourteen years. It is said that much of the anxiety suffered by their poor sister during those dreadful months of suspense appears in her portrait which so pleased the painter; it is, in any case, the monument of the love and devotion of a frail woman. The portrait is now in the possession of Mr. Waldorf Astor.

In 1770, Giuseppe Marchi, who had continued with Reynolds since they came together from Rome in 1752, being now thirty-five, determined to face the world on his own account, as a portrait painter. We know little of Marchi's abilities in that capacity, but he had already attained some reputation as an able engraver in mezzotint. His plates are relatively few, but they show a workman entirely competent, and some of them have an interest for us as having been produced under the eyes of Reynolds himself. His first plate we know of was from Sir Joshua's portrait of Miss Oliver, the print from which was published in 1767. In the following year he published the attractive engraving of little Miss Cholmondeley carrying the dog over the brook; other prints by Marchi from Reynolds's portraits are Mrs. Bouverie and Mrs. Crewe; Mrs. Hartley as a nymph with a child; Colman the younger; Samuel Dyer; and the admirable Oliver Goldsmith.

Marchi, as we learn from Farington, met with no great success as a painter on leaving Reynolds; he tried London first, and went later to Swansea. Having worked out whatever mine Glamorganshire possessed for an artist, he came again to London, where fortune still eluded him. Reynolds now offered him his old employment at the old terms, which Marchi joyfully accepted, and he returned to the drapery painting in Leicester Fields, "like the dove returning to the ark," as Reynolds, who esteemed his assistant, remarked. This, as we judge

from the date of his later plates from Reynolds's works, was about 1773, and he remained with his master to the end, himself dying, at the age of seventy-three, in 1808.

From the opening to the end of his career, Reynolds's advice was always at the disposal of young men with aspirations in the arts. He was accustomed to see them in his painting-room in the morning before he began his work, when he would look at their studies, and lend them pictures for copying. Stothard and Turner both spoke gratefully to Leslie of kindness of this sort they had received at Sir Joshua's hands. He was ever courteous and accommodating to these youngsters, except on certain occasions, when he did not shrink from dissuading an obviously incompetent youth from the profession by very brusque advice, which, in the circumstances, was perhaps the greatest kindness he could bestow.

As an instance of mistaken kindness in these matters, there is the history, related by Northcote, of Lowe, the natural son of Lord Sunderland, and the *protégé* of Dr. Johnson. Lowe was a student at the Academy at the time that Baretti was arrested for murder, and gave useful evidence at his trial. Baretti enlisted the influence of Cipriani and of others of his friends in the Academy in the boy's favour, with the result that the scholarship of 1771 was very unjustly bestowed upon Lowe, who was an indolent and inattentive student. He went to Rome, where he wrote letters complaining of the smallness of the allowance to Reynolds as President of the Academy, to which Reynolds replied dryly that he knew, from his own experience, that the allowance was sufficient. Lowe insolently replied that "it was impossible for a man to live on garbage and guts." In 1783 the young painter sent a ridiculous "Deluge" to the Academy, which was at first rejected by the Council; but upon the earnest

solicitation of Johnson, and through the good offices of Reynolds and Barry, it was admitted, and proved a complete failure. Lowe, as Northcote remarks, had better have been discouraged at first than lured into the belief that he was a genius.

Another of the young artists of the day who came in contact with Reynolds was William Doughty, a young man from Yorkshire, who had already produced some portrait etchings of local celebrities which showed some promise. Upon the recommendation of Mason, the poet, Doughty came to Reynolds in 1775, and remained in his house for about three years as pupil or assistant. Doughty it was who painted the posthumous portrait of the poet Gray from the description of his friends and with the help of a silhouette—the portrait upon which all existing representations of the poet are founded. Doughty, like Marchi, left Reynolds to start as a portrait painter, and went to Ireland with that object, but returned, in 1780, very poor and unsuccessful and much depressed, though he perhaps found some comfort when he married Sir Joshua's maid in that year.

Like Marchi, too, he turned to mezzotint engraving as a stop-gap, and produced some half-dozen excellent plates, four of these being from portraits by his old master. They were all published in 1779, on his return from Ireland. Doughty's engravings, like Marchi's, interest us as having been produced under the eye of the painter, and there are few better prints existing than his well-known "Johnson" and "Keppel," and the less famous "William Mason" and "Mary Palmer."

Reynolds's discourses at times seem to have had a prodigiously stimulating effect upon some of the budding artists who read them. There was one Brunton, whom Northcote found lodging at the same house when he came up to town from Plymouth, and, like himself, the son of

a watchmaker. Brunton was so fired by reading the second of Sir Joshua's dissertations, that he left his trade and presented himself to Reynolds, to whom he told his aspirations. Like Northcote, he received kindly advice, and permission to copy Sir Joshua's old masters. One hears of him later in the house of a connoisseur of those days, one Mr. Lock, who had a large gallery, and allowed the youth the run of it, and also, as Northcote states, provided young Brunton with pocket-money. It was Lock who brought over Mr. Cipriani from Italy. How much of this encouragement was good for these young men is a difficult question to decide; with Northcote it resulted in a fairly prosperous career, but he is the only one of the *protégés* of Reynolds who made anything of a name in later years; poor Brunton seems to have disappeared entirely from the artistic annals of the century.

We may take note here of Reynolds's first connection with Barry, the intractable painter who was later to become the practical exponent of Reynolds's theories on the grand style; Reynolds's own virulent opponent, and the one man whom the gentle president confessed to hating.

Barry was the son of a coasting skipper of Cork, who had shown signs of genius as a boy, and had been protected by the noble benevolence of Burke. As a result of that benevolence, Barry was at this time at Rome, where he was supported by Burke and his brother during his student period in that city.

Reynolds, in 1769, no doubt at Burke's suggestion, wrote to him a long letter, full of excellent advice founded upon his own experience, urging the importance of taking infinite pains; warning him against the danger of copying pictures for connoisseurs, "those ornamental pictures which the travelling gentlemen always bring

home with them as furniture for their houses;" and recommending the Sistine Chapel as the centre of all inspiration for the true artist.

In another letter found among Barry's papers, which, though unsigned, is almost certainly by Reynolds, he urged the importance of portrait painting upon the student "as a school in which a painter is to acquire the means of perfection, and not as the object of that perfection." Barry disregarded this last advice to his cost; he despised portrait painting, and starved on the grand style. The passage, however, gives an interesting glance into Reynolds's own mind. Portrait painting was the calling by which he lived, and by which he made his fame, and yet, as it would seem, he regarded it only as the means of attaining the perfection which he fondly hoped to display in those examples of the grand style which have added so little to his reputation.

In the early summer of 1771 there came out of Plymouth a young man armed with letters of introduction from Reynolds's friends the good Alderman Tolcher and Dr. John Mudge, credentials very sure of finding favour in Leicester Fields. This was young James Northcote, the boy who a year or two before we saw touching the hem of the great painter's raiment when he visited his native county with Dr. Johnson. James was the son of a watchmaker, and had sighed for the career of an artist from his childhood. He had, in the manner of aspiring youths of his kind, made the usual juvenile studies in Indian ink, and had at length produced a drawing of the "New Assembly Rooms and Bathing Place at Plymouth," which had tempted an engraver, and the sale of prints from the plate had produced the sum of five guineas for young Northcote. His honest father, however, would not hear of the artistic career, and bade the youth stick to his watches in the

family shop. The boy held his peace and obeyed for tl time. With infinite care he added another five guine to his savings, and, at the age of twenty-five, with te guineas in his pocket, saw the world open to him. A five o'clock on Whit-Sunday morning in 1771, accor- ingly, he and his elder brother Samuel stole away fro the family roof and started on a walk to London, the to seek their fortunes. They slept in haylofts and al houses, and performed the journey in five days, gettin only a final lift in the coach over the last stag Samuel's heart failed him within a week, when he r turned to his father; but the brave James duly presente himself in Leicester Fields with his letters of recom mendation.

Here, like all the young aspirants of his time, he wa sure of consideration at the hands of the kindly Reynold Besides the letters from the Plymouth notables, the bo had brought his own Devonshire accent, to which th heart of the painter warmed, as we are told. Some draw ings which the young man showed him appear to have found favour in Reynolds's eyes. One of these, Northcot thought, might form the subject of an engraving, and Reynolds agreeing, promised to use his interest in finding an artist to undertake the plate. But his most valuable aid was the recognition of young Northcote's earnestness and ability, and his kindly suggestion that he should come to Leicester Fields and begin his studies by copying from the important pictures which Reynolds had already gathered together at his house. The boy was elevated to the seventh heaven at the proposal, and began at once upon a Ruysdael, which the painter indicated as a suitable subject for his first attempt. The question of means the self-reliant Northcote settled for himself. There was a printseller, one Hooper, on Ludgate Hill, who gave him employment in tinting sheets of ornithological prints in

SIR JEFFREY AMHERST

water-colour. The sum which Northcote fixed upon as necessary for his sustenance was one shilling daily, and this he contrived to earn before nine in the morning. From that hour until dark he was copying at Leicester Fields, and, as he wrote to his brother, in perfect happiness. "My present engagement would render almost any state agreeable, for art to me is beyond every amusement on earth."

Such was Northcote's first connection with the master at whose feet he was to sit, whose disciple in art he was to become, and whose life he was afterwards to record. A closer connection than that of mere student in the gallery followed shortly after. "Sir Joshua Reynolds," says Northcote, in an unpublished autobiography quoted at length by Leslie, "now perceiving my evident fondness for the art, and also knowing that he could soon make me useful to him in his profession, seeing me one evening late in the gallery looking with much attention at the pictures, spoke to me and asked me if I would come and live in the house four or five years, and assist him in the same manner as his other scholars. This offer was immediately accepted by me with the extremest degree of pleasure; being by this means provided with my first wants, viz. board and lodging, besides being situated, as may be said, in the very centre of art."

Northcote's early letters to his friends in Devonshire throw a very interesting light on some details of Reynolds's life at this period. "I find Sir Joshua so entirely occupied all day with business or company, that I have seldom an opportunity of seeing him." There were two pupils in his establishment at the time—Clarke, a *protégé* of Goldsmith, and Gill, the son of a famous Bath pastry-cook. Northcote was surprised to find that these pupils were absolute strangers to the painter's methods of working, and that he made use of colours

and varnishes of which they knew nothing. He found, on comparing notes with these young men, that "he always painted in a room distant from them; that they never saw him unless he wanted to paint a hand or a piece of drapery from them, and then they were always dismissed as soon as he had done with them."

From the first Northcote received all kindness from the painter and his family, of which, indeed, he became almost a recognized member. A few weeks after his arrival he writes to his brother, "Sir Joshua behaves to me just as he does to his other pupils, or rather with more friendship. He is very kind to me, and often invites me to dine with him, and Miss Reynolds is the most good-natured woman I ever met with." Fanny, it appears, took to the young Devonian at once, and promised to show him her pictures. "She paints very fine, both history and portraits," he says. The shrewd boy did not fail to notice the want of sympathy between brother and sister. "Between ourselves," he says, "he seldom converses as we used to do in our family, and never instructs her in painting. I found she knew nothing of his having invited me to be his scholar and live in the house till I told her of it. She has the command of the household and the servants as much as he has."

Northcote worked in a small room adjoining Reynolds's own painting-room, a room full of canvases which had been left on the painter's hands. It was in this room that the portrait of Lely fell from its nail, knocked down three plaster busts from a high shelf on to Northcote's easel, fortunately missed that artist, but drove the stretcher of the picture he was engaged upon through four or five of Reynolds's canvases placed in a stack against the wall. That same room was a hunting-ground for connoisseurs with a few pounds at their

disposal. Lord Egremont there bought a canvas of Nelly O'Brien's children with a dog, and regretted that he had not bought others, for, as he explained to Leslie, "the prices asked by Sir Joshua were not high."

It was in this room that Northcote set himself to that life of diligent labour which enabled him, at least, to make the most of such abilities as he possessed, and to attain competence and success, if no very great reputation. Here he would arrange drapery with great care on the lay figure, when perhaps the painter would come in and remark that "it would not make good drapery if set so artificially, and that he would get it better by taking the chance of another toss of the drapery stuff, and by that means I should get nature, which is always superior to art." When it was finally arranged, Northcote would set to work. "It was very provoking," he writes, "after I had been for hours labouring on the drapery of one of his portraits, to see him with a few masterly sweeps of his pencil destroy nearly all my work, and turn it into something much finer; and yet, but for my work, it would not have been what he made it." We shall have frequent occasion to return to this room and take note of some of the conversations which Northcote heard from his place of vantage in the neighbouring painting-room. The painter, as we know, was deaf, and the sitters often raised their voices until they reached the ears of the pupil. Some of these conversations he reported, but always honestly and discreetly, and without malice.

Reynolds's private life at this period presents the same characteristics as always, a determination to spend the hours not employed in painting in social enjoyment. The pocket-books disclose a constantly increasing circle of acquaintances and a continuous record of appointments which leave few of his evenings unaccounted for. The Johnsonian connection brought him into contact with the

Thrales, and he now began that series of heads which included so many of his fine male portraits. Johnson was now a regular inmate of that household, whether at Southwark or Streatham. Under Mrs. Thrale's lively persuasion the Doctor had unbent so far as to wear metal buttons on his sober clothes, and to allow Thrale's butler to remove his old wig and replace it with a newly powdered one kept ready for the purpose as he passed through the hall to dinner. Most of his friends, including Reynolds, are to be found in the accounts of one or other of those famous parties recorded so minutely by the faithful Boswell. There is no man with whom Reynolds has more frequent engagements at this time than Goldsmith, and it seems to say much for the breadth of Reynolds's sympathies that two men of such diverse characters as the demagogue Wilkes and the gentle author of the "Vicar of Wakefield" should have been his chief intimates during these middle years of his life.

One of the first of his many acts of kindness to the poet was his attempt to bring him and Garrick together with a view to the production of the *Good-natured Man* by the actor in 1768. There had been much ill-feeling between the pair ever since Goldsmith's unlucky interview with Garrick in 1759, in which the latter refused his recommendation of the author to the secretaryship of the Society of Arts. Goldsmith, in his "Enquiry into Polite Learning," had made some allusions to actors and acting which the touchy Garrick had taken to himself. "Our actors all assume that state off the stage which they do on it," was one of these; and in another of his works he made one of his characters observe of the profession, "Though the law holds them as vagabonds, many of them earn a thousand a year." Garrick was highly offended, and when Goldsmith called, replied to his request for assistance, "Mr. Goldsmith having taken

pains to deprive himself of his assistance by an unprovoked attack upon his management in his 'Present State of Learning,' it was impossible he could lay any claim to any recommendation from him!" "In truth, he had spoken his mind," replied Goldsmith, "and believed what he said was right," whereupon the manager "dismissed him with civility."

Forster tells us that it was at Reynolds's house, nine years later, that the pair first met after that luckless interview, "and at Leicester Fields Goldsmith placed in Garrick's hand *The Good-natured Man*." Garrick, if we are to believe Tom Davies, expected that the author would esteem the patronage of his play a favour, but Goldsmith "rejected all ideas of kindness in a bargain that was intended to be of mutual advantage to both parties."

The sore was evidently not yet healed, and Reynolds's kindly offices were of little avail. Garrick took the play, it is true, but gravely proposed that it should be remodelled, and an additional part written, and that Whitehead should adjudicate between them as arbitrator. Goldsmith was furious, and both Reynolds and Burke intervened to make peace. The matter ended by Goldsmith's withdrawing the play and giving it to Colman, who produced it with a moderate success.

These unfortunate relations between his two friends perhaps go to explain Johnson's continued reluctance to admit Garrick to the club, by which that company was deprived of the volatile actor's company until 1773. We have seen what he said to Reynolds when Garrick proposed himself. Later the Doctor told Thrale he would himself blackball him if he was put up. "Why, sir, I love my little David dearly," said he, "better than all or any of his flatterers do; but surely one ought to sit in such a society as ours 'unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or

player.'" To Hawkins he said, "He will disturb us, sir, with his buffoonery;" and so Garrick had to remain outside that select circle, making many wistful inquiries the while as to what happened at their meetings, and whether his name was often mentioned.

With Reynolds, Goldsmith was now on the terms of the greatest intimacy. Reynolds was never so happy, apparently, as in dining with the poet at his rooms or a tavern, or joining in the shilling rubbers at the Devil or the Globe. The pair were seen together in the milder pleasures of the town of those days, at Ranelagh, perhaps, or Vauxhall, the painter in his suit of sober brown, the poet in the famous "Tyrian bloom satin grain coat," and the "garter blue breeches," made for him by good Mr. Filby. It would seem, too, that Reynolds interested himself in some of those poor dependents who were ever in Goldsmith's thoughts. There are entries in the pocket-book which seem to show that Goldsmith recommended some of these, or their children, as models to the painter, and that Reynolds took much trouble in tracing these humble sitters in very unfashionable parts of the town.

Other entries of these invaluable pocket-books go to show that Reynolds partook of the exotic entertainment known as the masquerade, an entertainment in great vogue from 1770 onwards, which was purveyed to the highest fashion by the ingenious Mrs. Cornelys at Carlisle House in Soho Square, an old mansion of the Howards which stood on the site of the present Italian Church. It is probable, too, that he took lessons in dancing or deportment about the same time, as there is an appointment recorded with a famous dancing master of those days. He was certainly at three or four of those surprising entertainments in 1771, probably in a plain domino, where he would meet many of his friends and sitters. At that

on February 26, Lord Carlisle appeared as a running footman, Mr. Garrick as a doctor, Lady Waldegrave as Jane Shore, and Captain Watson of the Guards as Adam. Two of his prettiest sitters, Mrs. Crewe and Lady Almeria Carpenter, came forward dressed as ballad singers, and gave a song proper to the occasion, which the company very obligingly encored, as we are told.

What we may regard as the central incident of the masquerade, however, occurred at the opening of the Pantheon in 1772, when we know from his pocket-book Reynolds was present, and, we may be sure, was much amused. The central figures of the incident were two ladies sitting to him at the time, Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Baddeley. An edict had gone forth from the managers of the Pantheon that "women of slight character" were to be excluded from the entertainment, and when Sophia Baddeley presented herself she was refused admittance. That lady, however, had thoughtfully provided herself with an escort. The bloods of Almack's and White's had surrounded her chair in St. James's Street, tramped the whole way to the Pantheon in the Oxford Road, and were now prepared to shed blood in defence of the slighted Baddeley. They drew their swords, overawed the constables at the door, and as many as fifty of them formed up in a double line in the room and made an archway of their weapons, through which the triumphant lady marched in, to be received and congratulated by the Duchess of Argyll and Ancaster. Mrs. Abington, we learn, had waited to hear of her rival's fortune before presenting herself, but was now able to join the distinguished company without any anxiety.

Reynolds, in July, 1771, attended at the Installation of the Knights of the Garter at Windsor, by command of His Majesty, who perhaps had in his mind a commission to the painter for a pictorial record of that function,

which, however, never took shape. Reynolds, in fact, was the poorer by the loss of his laced hat and gold watch, which were both appropriated by some unworthy guest of His Majesty. The great personages who were the central figures of the ceremony, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Mecklenburg, the Prince of Brunswick, the Earl of Albemarle, the Dukes of Marlborough and Grafton, and Earl Cowper, had already sat to the painter—a significant illustration of the breadth of his practice.

Reynolds was away five weeks in the autumn of 1772 on another visit to his native county, where, as before, he stayed with his sisters at Torrington, and joined the hospitable society of his old friends the Parkers at Saltram and at Mount Edgcumbe. We find notes of cub hunting, of partridge shooting, and riding, which exhibit the painter in a new aspect; but he doubtless graduated in some of those masculine sports during his boyhood in that same pleasant county. There is a bet of a distinctly sporting character, too, entered in pencil in his pocket-book.

"Mr. Parker bets Sir Joshua five guineas that he does not beat Mr. Robinson; and ten guineas that Mr. Montagu does not beat Mr. Parker, to shoot with Mr. Treby's bullet gun at 100 yards' distance; and a sheet of paper to be put up, and the person who shoots nearest the centre wins."

This visit to Devonshire resulted in a very notable addition to Reynolds's household, when he persuaded his lately widowed sister, Mrs. Palmer, to allow him to take back his niece Theophila, the sprightly girl of thirteen, whom he practically adopted in that year. Offy, as her fond uncle loved to call her, remained in his house, with a short interval of a few months of illness, until she married Squire Gwatkin, years later. We shall see Offy

often sitting to the painter for figures of girlish archness. Mary, her eldest sister, also came in 1773 and added much to the charm of his circle. "The Miss Palmers," says Fanny Burney, "added to the grace of his table and of his evening circle by their pleasing manners and the beauty of their persons."

Reynolds's hospitality at Leicester Fields was by this time a very notable addition to the social entertainments of the town. John Courtenay described those famous dinners to Sir James Macintosh.

"The table prepared for seven or eight was often made to hold twice the number. When the guests were at last packed, the deficiency of knives, forks, plates, and glasses made itself felt. Every one called, as he wanted, for bread, wine, or beer, and lustily, or there was little chance of being served. There had once been sets of decanters and glasses provided to furnish the table, and enable the guests to help themselves. These had gone the way of all glass, and had never been replaced. But though the dinner might be careless and inelegant, and the servants awkward and too few, these shortcomings only enhanced the singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wine, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to, nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amid the convivial, animated bustle of his guests, Sir Joshua sat perfectly composed, protected partly by his deafness, partly by his equanimity, always attentive, by help of his trumpet, to what was said, never minding what was eaten and drunk, but leaving every one at liberty to scramble for himself. Peers temporal and spiritual, statesmen, physicians, lawyers, actors, men of letters, painters, musicians, made up the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord. Dinner was served precisely at five, whether all the company had arrived or not. Sir Joshua never kept

many guests waiting for one, whatever his rank or consequence. His friends and intimate acquaintance will ever love his memory, and will long regret the cheerfulness of that irregular convivial table, which no one has attempted to revive or imitate, or was, indeed, qualified to supply."

At one of these informal entertainments, in Leicester Fields, appeared the dish of peas which were anything but their natural colour, and which one of Beauclerc's waggish friends recommended should be sent to Hammersmith, because that was the way to "Turnham Green," a pun which delighted Goldsmith, who determined to fire it off as his own at Burke's, who had much relish for that sort of humour. But poor Goldsmith forgot the point, and nobody laughed.

CHAPTER VI

AFFLUENCE AND LEISURE

1773–1777

IT may be remembered, to the credit of Lord North, that good-humoured, indolent minister, who was sadly out of place as the instrument of oppression he became in the hands of George the Third, that, in 1773, as Chancellor of the University of Oxford, he used his influence to have conferred upon Reynolds, who by this time was thoroughly identified with North's vehement political opponents, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. Reynolds was in exceedingly good company on that occasion. Lord Carnarvon, Lord Shelburne, Dr. Beattie, Lord Bessborough, and Lord Spencer, all friends of the painter, received a like honour on the same day. Reynolds took the occasion to pay a visit to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough at Blenheim. We are told that he was much surprised and mortified at receiving a cool reception at their hands after a very warm invitation. He was at a loss to guess the reason, but upon consulting his sister Fanny on his return, she assured him that it was because he had appeared before the duke and duchess before changing his travelling boots.

There is a tradition in the Edgcumbe family that about this time Reynolds much wished to represent his native borough of Plympton in Parliament, and so to

revive the artistic connection between that place and Parliament which had been initiated by Sir Christopher Wren, who had sat as its member. From whatever reason, however, his wish was never fulfilled. But in the previous autumn he had made a journey to Devonshire, where a lesser, though apparently very acceptable, honour awaited him. On his return to London he wrote a warm letter of thanks to Captain Ourry in reply to one from that gentleman with the intimation that he had been elected an Alderman of the Borough. The honour was further increased by his election, in 1773, as Mayor of Plympton, where he went in September to be inaugurated in the office. It was just before he left London on that journey that he happened to be walking in Richmond Gardens, when he unexpectedly encountered the King and some members of the Royal Family. His Majesty called the painter to him, and told him he had heard of the honour conferred by his native place. Sir Joshua assured the King of the truth of the rumour, and added it was an honour that gave him more pleasure than any he had ever received, "except that your Majesty was pleased to confer upon me."

Reynolds sent his portrait to Plympton to be placed in the council chamber, and wrote to Sir William Elford, asking him to see it hung in a good situation. Sir William placed it "between two old pictures, which served as a foil and set it off to great advantage." The remark amused Reynolds very much, these old pictures being early portraits of Captain Ourry and Captain Edgcumbe painted by himself.

Reynolds's gratification at his election as Mayor of his native place, which was undoubtedly genuine, has been the occasion of some surprise among certain of his biographers. But it seems a very human and creditable

gratification altogether. The feeling which inspired it was that so well expressed by Dr. Johnson, when, a few years earlier, his friend had painted his portrait, and presented it to Lucy Porter, the Doctor's stepdaughter, who placed it in her house at Lichfield, where Johnson found it. "When I came to Lichfield," he wrote to Reynolds, "I found that my portrait had been visited and much admired. Every man has a lurking wish to appear considerable in his native place, and I was pleased with the dignity conferred by such a testimony of your regard."

The friendship of Reynolds with Johnson was by this time at its fullest, and we may think of the painter as often in the doctor's company, with his placid good nature ever at the disposal of less fortunate friends, who were more subject to the great man's brusqueness than himself. Many remarks of themselves and their acquaintance record the relations of the two friends. "Sir Joshua," said Johnson to Fanny Burney, "possesses the largest share of inoffensiveness of any man I know." "There goes a man," he said to Thrale, "unspoiled by prosperity." To Boswell he said, "I know no man who has passed through life with more observation than Reynolds. He is the same all the year round; in illness and pain he is still the same. Sir, he is the most invulnerable man I know; the man with whom, if you should quarrel, you will find the most difficulty how to abuse."

Reynolds was always ready and eager to acknowledge what he owed to Johnson. The calls of his profession, as we have seen, left the painter little time for reading, and his lack of study he endeavoured to supply by frequent contact with that vigorous intellect. "You state very properly," wrote Burke to Malone, "how much Reynolds owed to the writings and conversation of Johnson, and nothing better shows the greatness of Sir

Joshua's parts than his taking advantage of both and making application of them to his profession, while Johnson neither understood, nor desired to understand, anything of painting."

While Johnson was yet alive Reynolds once wrote to a friend, "We are both of Johnson's school; for my own part, I acknowledge the highest obligations to him. He may be said to have formed my mind, and to have brushed away from it a great deal of rubbish."

Gibbon spoke of Johnson as Reynolds's oracle; there is evidence, too, that the oracle regarded the votary's seeking inspiration elsewhere with some jealousy. Johnson complained to Boswell that Reynolds was "too much an echo of Burke," and when that gentleman and Charles Fox came to take prominent parts in the proceedings of the Club, the Doctor, as he expressed it, was glad "to knock Fox on the head without ceremony," and deplored the fact that the painter was "too much under the Fox star and the Irish constellation" to please him.

Their real relations are preserved in such passages as these. The Doctor, nevertheless, often introduced some of that chastening which goes with love. It may have been at the dinner which Thrale gave in his big copper in 1772, where, perhaps, was invented the dish known as Porterhouse steak, that Johnson delivered himself upon the subject of Reynolds's practice. "It has often grieved me, sir," said he, addressing the painter, "to see so much mind, as the science of painting requires, laid out upon such perishable materials. Why do you not oftener make use of copper?" Reynolds urged the difficulty of procuring a plate large enough for historical subjects, and was going to raise further objections, when Johnson interrupted.

"What foppish obstacles are these! Here is Thrale has a thousand ton of copper. You may paint it all

NELLY O'BRIEN

round, if you will, and it will serve him to brew in afterwards—will it not, sir?"

Johnson chose to profess a greater ignorance of art than was really the case, in order at times to tease Reynolds, though we imagine his ignorance of the subject was profound enough. He expressed rather well their attitude towards each other's work in a remark he made once at Thrale's. Thrale supposed Reynolds, being so busy a man, had had no time to read "Taxation no Tyranny." "No," said Johnson; "I never look at his paintings, so he won't read my writings." Johnson's reception, too, of his own portrait in the Thrale Gallery was not without humour. "It is not friendly," he said, "to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man." Mrs. Thrale pointed to Reynolds's own picture as a proof of his honesty and impartiality. "He may paint himself as deaf as he chooses," replied Johnson, "but I will not be 'Blinking Sam' in the eyes of posterity."

Yet Johnson could be very eloquent upon Reynolds's work and upon the beauty of his portraits. Just as Johnson, although ignorant of the real meaning of poetry, could write touching verse—as witness those tender lines to the memory of Levett—so here he touched upon some of the material qualities, at least, of great portraiture.

"I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and to goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead."

The memoirs and letters of those days would give us almost a complete history of Reynolds's life, quite independent of his own notebooks and papers. His kindly personality was a constant theme for those pleasant writers; there is no more distinguished figure than Reynolds's in almost any of those classics in which the

social history of the period is recorded. In Boswell's masterpiece, who so often appears as the gentle painter, and always as the suave and kindly moderator, ever ready to stand between the dictator and his victim, and to shield one or other of that company from the goring of the bull they all loved and dreaded? Goldsmith thinks Garrick mean for having altered some words in a play to pay a compliment to the Queen. Johnson, in defending Garrick, develops his defence into an attack of much greater force than poor Goldsmith's. "How is it mean in a player, a showman, a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter the Queen?" Reynolds mildly deprecates that estimate of their friend. Boswell joins in, to be gored more thoroughly than the rest.

"You say, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick exhibits himself for a shilling. In this respect he is only on a footing with a lawyer who exhibits himself for his fee and will maintain any nonsense or absurdity if the case require it."

"Why, sir, what does that prove?—only that a lawyer is worse. Boswell is now like Jack in the 'Tale of a Tub,' who, when he is puzzled by an argument, hangs himself. He thinks I shall cut him down, but I'll let him hang."

Reynolds comes as usual to the relief of the sufferer.

"Mr. Boswell thinks that, the profession of a lawyer being unquestionably honourable, if he can show the profession of a player to be more honourable, he proves his argument."

It is Goldsmith's turn at another meeting. "It is amazing how little Goldsmith knows," opines the Doctor. "He seldom comes where he is not more ignorant than any one else." "Yet there is no man whose company is more liked," pleads Reynolds. Johnson admits it, but explains it by the company's gratification in finding themselves superior to so distinguished a writer.

It was Reynolds, too, who interfered to save Goldsmith

on that memorable occasion when, in expressing a wish for new members of the club, he remarked, "There can now be nothing new among us; we have travelled over one another's minds." "Sir," said the Doctor, "you have not travelled over my mind, I promise you."

It was one of those verbal rudenesses of Johnson's which produced one of the finest compliments ever paid to Reynolds—a compliment in which the spirit of his courtly manner is most effectively embalmed. At Reynolds's own house, in Leicester Fields, at the beginning of 1773, where were met Johnson, Garrick, Charles Fox, and the Dean of Derry, among others, the last-named opined that after forty-five a man did not improve. "I differ with you, sir," said Johnson. "A man may improve; and you yourself have great room for improvement." The dean, as Dick Burke, who recorded the incident, relates, was a little stunned, but, recovering, said, "On recollection, I see no cause to alter my opinion, except I was to call it improvement for a man to grow—which I allow he may—positive, rude, and insolent, and save arguments by brutality." The company, with some difficulty, changed the subject when they saw Johnson groaning a preparation to reply. It is to the Doctor's credit that he was heartily sorry for his rudeness—told Fanny so when he went upstairs, and was touchingly submissive to the dean in the drawing-room. Next morning the dean sent these verses to Reynolds—

"Dear Knight of Plympton, teach me how
To suffer with unclouded brow
And smile serene as thine
The jest uncouth and truth severe;
Like thee to turn my deafest ear,
And calmly drink my wine.

"Thou sayest not only skill is gained
But genius, too, may be attained,
By studious invitation;

Thy temper mild, thy genius fine,
I'll study till I make them mine
By constant meditation.

"Let Johnson teach me how to place
In fairest light each borrowed grace;
From him I'll learn to write—
Copy his free and easy style,
And from the roughness of his file
Grow, like himself, polite."

The honours of this encounter were surely with the dean.

Another meeting of that famous band, where there was nothing but goodwill and solicitude for the most loveable of their number, was that of March 15, 1773, when they all gathered about Goldsmith at the Shakespeare Tavern, by Covent Garden Theatre, on the eve of the production of *She Stoops to Conquer*. They were all there—Johnson, with no word of anything but encouragement for his pet; Edmund and Richard Burke, full of kindliness as ever; Reynolds himself, whom we may be sure was the kindest of them all; Caleb Whitefoord and George Steevens. Sir Joshua had been more than once to the rehearsals with his sister and the Miss Hornecks, and had watched the shaping of the piece into something which augured success, though only actors of second rank were cast for those characters which have since become permanent figures of the stage. Reynolds told Northcote that at dinner Goldsmith hardly spoke a word, and was "unable to get down a mouthful;" and when the party broke up to go to the theatre, they found the author missing. But the friends went in a solid body to applaud the poet's work, and Reynolds sent the faithful Ralph Kirkley up into the gallery to lead the laughter among the gods.

Who does not know what followed — the frequent laughter that began to flow almost from the first, the uproarious success which was assured when the curtain

was raised on the last act? Between seven and eight o'clock one of the friends went off to find Goldsmith. Goodness knows how they divined where to look for him, but he was found disconsolately pacing the Mall, half a mile away from the playhouse. The kindly messenger dragged back the unnerved author to the stage-door in the first scene of the fifth act. A hiss from the pit caused poor Goldy to wince. "Pooh!" said Colman; "don't be afraid of a squib, when we've been sitting these two hours on a barrel of gunpowder." Colman's dismal prophecies were already falsified by the success of the play, which had gone from strength to strength from the second act onwards, and the remark was required by his abandonment of his previous attitude of despair. It was Colman's last disparagement of Goldsmith's work, for he was so baited by his acquaintance, by the press, by the public, as a blundering judge of comedy, after his prophecies about *She Stoops to Conquer*, that he fled incontinently to Bath to escape, and he was even at last forced to appeal to Goldsmith himself to protect him from the raillery which was his portion for the rest of the season.

That same evening of March 15 must have been a precious memory for Reynolds and the rest of those kind friends who loved poor Goldsmith. The poet's career was already approaching its term. We all know the details of that last year of his life—the alternation of fevered excitement with gloomy depression; the poor soul distracted by his load of debt and anxiety, forming all manner of plans for future work and retrenchment—plans for selling his chambers in the Temple, and working quietly in the country at the books and dictionaries for which he had already received payment, and at new histories and new comedies, which would clear him and give him a fresh start. The next night he would be at Ranelagh or Vauxhall in a coat of Mr. Filby's for which

he had not paid; the night after that, perhaps, he would drag the unwilling Johnson and Reynolds to a tavern. Reynolds would look grave, perhaps thinking that the bill for food and wine would be left unpaid, and his purse would be open for that necessary office when the dinner was over. Johnson, with less delicacy, would send away the second course untouched as a protest against Goldsmith's improvidence.

It was at one of those meetings, which had grown into a kind of informal club, where Goldsmith, Reynolds and Garrick, the Burkes, and Dean Barnard from Derry, Whitefoord, Cumberland and the rest foregathered at the St. James's Coffee House, that poor Goldsmith was most happily provoked into that series of epitaphs on his friends which we may consider as his last work—a series which preserves for us, among many admirable characters, that of the gentle Reynolds drawn by the man who perhaps loved him best. They pitted Goldsmith and Garrick against each other as epitaph writers, and the actor began the contest.

> "Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

The verse suggests very happily the attitude of Garrick towards that other man of a vanity as great, perhaps, but a genius greater than his own. Goldsmith took the lines in all good humour, and, after the idea had been developed by Whitefoord and others at later dinners, produced those inimitable "Verses of Retaliation for the epitaphs of the former meeting." In those verses he certainly got equal with Mr. Garrick.

> "Like an ill-judging beauty his colours he spread,
> And beplastered with rouge his own natural red;
> On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
> 'Twas only that when he was off he was acting;
>
> * * * * *

MRS. CREWE AS ST. GENEVIÉVE

Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick;
He cast off his friends like a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back.
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame,
Till, his relish grown callous almost to disease,
Who peppered the highest was surest to please."

We are told that blotted copies of these verses were found lying about his rooms in that last illness which was to come to end all the poor fellow's troubles a week or two later. One of them was left unfinished.

"Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
He has not left a wiser or better behind.
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland.
Still born to improve us in every part—
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart;
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing;
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.
By flattery unspoiled . . ."

These verses contain, perhaps, the best epitome of Reynolds's character that is ever likely to be written, and one likes to think that poor Goldsmith died blessing the kind friend to whom he owed so much. It seems almost certain that they were the last lines he ever wrote.

Most of his friends were assembled at the Turk's Head on March 25, 1774, and were wondering at the absence of Goldsmith, who was expected to congratulate some new and distinguished members of the Club—Charles Fox; his own friend Bunbury, who had just married the Jessamy Bride; Steevens, the editor of the Doctor's "Shakespeare"; Gibbon; and Fordyce the physician. "Close on midnight came a letter to Fordyce from Mr.

Hawes the apothecary, asking him to come at once to Dr. Goldsmith, who was in bed with fever."

Ten days later the fitful fever of his life came to an end for poor Goldsmith, in the surroundings which we know. "The staircase of Brick Court," says Mr. Forster in that admirable "Life," "is said to have been filled with mourners the reverse of domestic; women without a home, without domesticity of any kind, with no friend but him they had come to weep for; outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city to whom he had never forgotten to be kind and charitable." It was a different end to that for which the poor soul was always sighing, and which he expressed in those tender verses which are surely among the most pathetic in the language. Taste in poetry and criticism changes, but can we imagine a day when these lines will cease to appeal to the fondest feelings of his fellow-countrymen?

"In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs, and God has given my share,
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Among the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I thought and all I saw;
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return, and die at home at last."

It pleased Horace Walpole to assert that Goldsmith was neglected by his friends at the last. There is no evidence one way or the other, but it is impossible to believe that such was the case, and one likes to think of Reynolds himself at that sad bedside. It is surely less than likely that the kindnesses which had never failed during that

long and affectionate connection would be wanting in those last moments. Burke, we are told, on hearing of the death of their friend, burst into tears. Northcote says that it was the severest blow Reynolds ever received. On receiving the news, he laid down his pencils and left his canvases untouched, "a circumstance the most extraordinary for him," "who passed no day without a line." It was Reynolds, too, who took charge of the dead man's affairs, unravelled that knotty subject, and found that poor Goldsmith owed £2000. "Was ever poet so trusted before?" said Johnson.

There were other friends who mourned the gentle Goldsmith besides those we have seen watching round him at the end; those charming Hornecks, the Jessamy Bride and her sister, whom he knew through Reynolds, who were among the tenderest of his many friends, who had cheered and pitied him, and entertained him so often with their laughter and affection. At the request of these sisters the coffin was opened before the final scene in the Temple churchyard, and a lock of his hair was given to the Jessamy Bride. She lived well on into modern times, and Hazlitt records how he met her as an old and still beautiful lady in Northcote's painting-room, when she said how proud she was that Dr. Goldsmith had admired her. "In her," says he, "the Graces had triumphed over time. She was one of the Ninon de l'Enclos people, of the list of the immortals. She had gone through all the stages of beauty, and had lent a grace to each. . . . I could almost fancy the shade of Goldsmith in the room, looking round with complacency."

We can well imagine the blank which the passing of that gentle spirit left in the circle of these many friends who so loved him. It must have marked a period in the life of Reynolds. One recalls with pleasure that dinner in Leicester Fields later, when the grief had perhaps

softened into a tender memory, but a memory to be defended against disparagement even of the slightest. Some unfortunate critic there expressed some doubts as to the merits of poor Goldsmith's writings. Dr. Johnson rolled and snorted. "If nobody were suffered to abuse poor Goldy but those who could write as well," said he, "he would have few censors."

Topham Beauclerc, writing to Lord Charlemont in 1777, complains of a lack of attendance at the club. "Our club," says he, "has dwindled to nothing; Sir Joshua and Goldsmith have got into such a round of pleasure, that they have no time." One reads, indeed, very frequently of Reynolds at one mild function or another in the letters and diaries of that day. There is Hannah More, for example, who has preserved for us many interesting glimpses of the painter. She seems to have made the acquaintance of the Reynoldses through the Garricks, with whom the schoolmistress was intimate.

Hannah was often at Leicester Square, "at the amiable Sir Joshua Reynolds's," where she met "a brilliant circle of both sexes not in general literary, though partly so." She soon became fast friends with Fanny Reynolds, and the friendship appears to have been very useful to the lady in her social aspirations. She longed to pay what she called "her devoirs to my dear Doctor Johnson," and at Leicester Fields accordingly she was introduced to that great man, who came to her very obligingly with a verse from her Morning Hymn on his lips, and a cockatoo on his finger. It was Fanny, too, who took Hannah in the big coach to call on the Doctor, and told him of Hannah's raptures on the way; and the Doctor called Hannah a silly thing, but was very well pleased, as he told Fanny, at Hannah's honest enthusiasm.

We learn from the poetess, too, that at this time Leicester Fields was considered a kind of antechamber

for those seeking introductions to Johnson. We are told also that "Sir Joshua was the idol of every company," and that he was to be met frequently at one or other of the choice feminine assemblies of those days. There was a group of ladies who took themselves mighty seriously, without, however, leaving much permanent mark upon their times, at whose parties Reynolds, with his courtly manners, his suave disposition, and, above all, his fame as the leader of art in England, was a very acceptable ornament.

At the head of these was the incomparable Mrs. Montague, the chief of the Bluestockings, with her wealth and social position, her views on Shakespeare, and her salon in Hill Street, where she placed intellectual before social qualifications, and where she gathered together the wits and literati of her time, and where we find Reynolds appeared as a lion from 1772 onwards. Hannah More obliges us with a portrait of this lady.

"Mrs. Montague is not only the finest genius, but the finest lady I ever saw. She lives in the highest style of magnificence, her apartments and table are in the most splendid taste. But what baubles are these when speaking of a Montague! Her countenance is the most animated in the world, the sprightly vivacity of fifteen, and the judgment and experience of a Nestor."

A friendly rival of this phœnix was Mrs. Vesey, who held her salon at first in Bolton Row, and later in Clarges Street. This lady was the wife of Mr. Agmondesham Vesey, the Accountant-General for Ireland, and a member of the club. Mrs. Vesey, who was known as "the Sylph," considered that she had a special call upon Reynolds and his clubmates, and fixed her assemblies for the alternate Tuesdays on which the club then met, when its members were accustomed to adjourn from their supper to that lady's room. Miss Monckton, too, whom

people yet living remember as the eccentric Lady Cork, was already making her mother's house in Charles Street famous as a meeting-place for notabilities. Mrs. Cholmondeley was another of these intellectuals—Mrs. Cholmondeley, the "airy lady," whom Johnson so much admired, and whose hand he took at the dinner-table and held in wonder at its smallness and whiteness. At all these, as at Mrs. Ord's, who conducted entertainments of the same character, entertainments where cards were excluded, and conversation was the chief attraction, Reynolds was a frequent visitor during these years. Here he met very good company, no doubt, and was able to exchange ideas with the choicest feminine minds of his day: Mrs. Chapone, the head of the Richardsonian cult, Richardson's "ever obliged and affectionate child;" and Miss Elizabeth Carter, too, the learned translator of "Epictetus," with whom Mrs. Chapone was at this time exchanging odes.

With Mrs. Thrale, who in a way rivalled some of these ladies, Reynolds was already on terms of intimacy. Johnson had become an inmate of that household, and the vivacious lady now surrounded herself and the Doctor with a circle which has been compared with that of Holland House of a half-century later. Garrick, Goldsmith, Boswell, Murphy, Burney, Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Crewe, Loughborough and Dunning, Mulgrove and Holroyd, were among the people Reynolds would meet constantly either at Streatham or Southwark.

In 1773 Reynolds was hard at work on the heads of Johnson, Burke, and Goldsmith, for Mrs. Thrale's gallery, for which Lords Lyttleton and Sandys had already given him sittings. Mrs. Thrale was distracted by domestic trouble during those years. She had just lost a beloved mother and an only son, financial disaster was threatening her husband, and she herself has recorded that she

found little comfort in a daughter "never partial to a mother, who sought in vain for her friendship." She was often impatient at the slow process of the collection, and amused those dismal years by writing characters in verse of the originals of her portraits. This is what she found to say of Reynolds—

> "Of Reynolds all good should be said and no harm,
> Though the heart is too frigid, the pencil too warm;
> Yet each fault from his converse we still must disclaim,
> As his temper 'tis peaceful, and pure as his fame.
> Nothing in it o'erflows, nothing ever is wanting,
> It nor chills like his kindness, nor glows like his painting.
> When Johnson by strength overpowers our mind,
> When Montague dazzles, and Burke strikes us blind,
> To Reynolds well pleased for relief we must run,
> Rejoice in his shadow, and shrink from the sun."

The artists who had yearly exhibited their work since that first exhibition at the Foundling Hospital in 1759, are clearly entitled, we think, to some credit for the improvement of taste in artistic matters which began to manifest itself in England during the latter half of the century. The dissemination each year of some scores of the fine portraits of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney among the relatively small numbers of the English gentry must alone have had some effect in revivifying the dry bones of English taste. The efforts of the Dilettante Society, also, were by this time lending some assistance to the leavening of the lump. Even the exquisites of Pall Mall were inspired by the prevailing spirit, for we find record of the generous enthusiasm for the arts among the Maccaronies of the Sçavoir Vivre Club, the distinguished parent of the present Boodles in St. James's Street, where to-day the country gentlemen of England lay their heads together about the affairs of foxhunters. In 1773 the members of the Sçavoir Vivre announced that they would award every year a medal and £100 for the best poem,

the best picture, the best piece of sculpture, and smaller sums for the best engraving and the best piece of music produced during each year in the ordinary practice of the professions concerned.

It was this hopeful stir in public taste, perhaps, which induced Reynolds to propose an attempt by the Academy to introduce a scheme of decoration by British artists into St. Paul's.

The scheme seems to have originated at a dinner at Newton's, the Bishop of Bristol, where Reynolds had met West. The talk fell upon Wren's great building, and his supposed design of filling up the blank spaces of his walls with decorative paintings. The two painters were fascinated with the idea of beautifying the national church with the work of contemporary artists, and both offered their own services on the spot. Mr. West was to oblige with "Moses delivering the Laws," Reynolds with a "Nativity." The dean approved the idea, and offered his aid to the scheme, a promise which he fulfilled by obtaining the ready approval of the King, the Archbishop of York, the Lord Mayor, and of all the guardians of the cathedral except one, the Bishop of London. He seems to have forgotten the bishop—a very unfortunate omission, as we shall see.

Reynolds recommended the plan to the Academy at a meeting in August, as a development of a scheme, then under consideration by that body, of decorating the chapel of the Old Somerset House with paintings by living artists. The idea was received with acclamation. The names of Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Mrs. Angelica Kauffmann were added to those of Reynolds and West, and the Society of Arts, who were invited to join the scheme, named four other artists. Reynolds and the Council addressed the King on the subject, and explained their views. "Instead of the present unfinished state of

ts inside," they said, speaking of St. Paul's, "we wish o see it decorated in a manner suitable to the beauty nd dignity of its external architecture. Therefore, the istorical painters in your Royal Academy, convinced of he advantage which would arise to the arts and the ountry, in every point of view, from such an undertaking, re desirous to engage in the decoration of this noble uilding with paintings from the Bible in the most liberal nanner, for they conceive that the very small compensaion with which their love for their art would induce them o be satisfied, might easily be raised by keeping open he annual exhibition of the Royal Academy for a fortnight longer than usual for two or three years."

Everything connected with the scheme thus appeared to be going well; the artists proposed to find necessary means from the exhibition of their own works, the Court was propitious, and no objection seems to have been expected in any quarter. Suddenly Bishop Newton appears to have bethought him of the Bishop of London, whom he had rather maladroitly neglected to consult at the beginning. Bishop Terrick at once settled the matter.

"My good lord," he wrote, in answer to Bishop Newton, "I have already been informed that such an affair is in contemplation; but whilst I live and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the Metropolitan Church to be opened for the introduction of Popery."

Newton vainly pointed out that Wren himself had contemplated a colour scheme for the decoration of the church, and that in numerous cathedrals and churches, both in London and the provinces, pictures had been admitted without Popery following. The bishop remained obdurate, and St. Paul's remained empty of all ornament, except the monochromes of Thornhill in the dome, until well within living memory. It was not till nearly twenty

years later, indeed, that sculpture was first admitted with the statues of Howard and Johnson.

This old controversy about the decoration of St. Paul's seems to have a present interest, in view of a more recent discussion on the same subject, the echoes of which have hardly died away at this moment. Opinion upon the question in these later days was certainly more divided than in the times of good Bishop Terrick. But whichever side one may have taken in the modern controversy, he may at least be grateful to that excellent divine for having saved the cathedral from Angelica Kauffmann and Mr. Cipriani.

The hundred and fifty sitters in a year which had marked the high-water mark of Reynolds's activity had in these middle years of his career fallen to some sixty, a fact, however, which few who admire him will regret. When we remember that the last years of his life were clouded by a failure of his eyesight, we cannot but rejoice that there came, at the time we consider, a relaxation, either from choice or necessity, of those unremitting labours of his prime. This middle period through which we follow him were years of rich harvest, where that leisure gave him opportunity to choose both in subject and treatment, of which he made the fullest use. He was assiduous in his efforts to be represented by his best in the annual exhibitions, and by glancing at the pictures which appeared during the five years following 1772, we may be sure of finding some of his choicest work. In his studio we shall see in origin other of those stately canvases by which his fame chiefly lives.

It is noticeable that, though Reynolds was now at times wanting a continuous flow of patrons into that room in Leicester Fields, he was still uniformly employed during the hours which he prescribed to himself for his day's work, but that he began to devote to fancy and

istorical subjects the hours which at an earlier period e would have given to his fashionable clients. This was he period of the "Ugolino," of the "Strawberry Girl," f "Robinetta" and "Muscipula," of the "Shepherd Boys nd Girls," of the "Blackguard Mercury," and of the Infant Samuel." It was the period, also, of the "Ladies lecorating a Term of Hymen," in the National Gallery; f the portrait of the purblind Baretti; of the "Lady Cockburn and her Children," which, on its appearance before the hanging committee of the exhibition, moved hat body to enthusiastic cheers; of the "Master Crewe;" f the little "Lady Caroline Montague" in the snow; bove all, of the lovely Mrs. Sheridan as "St. Cecilia."

Many of Reynolds's devoted disciples would wish hat he had never made these excursions into the historical or the grand styles, of which we may hold the Ugolino" to be his best example. Northcote tells us ts origin very plainly. The first germ of the idea robably came to Reynolds from Richardson's Treatise. That author, speaking of Michael Angelo's treatment in marble of the ghastly incident in Dante, hinted at the possibilities of the same subject for a painter. Among he models whom Reynolds in his leisure had picked up n the street was one White, a paviour, whose striking face had attracted him, and who, through Reynolds's help, soon stepped into a lucrative position as model to almost every painter of note in the town.

Reynolds having made and exhibited a study of White's head, Burke or Goldsmith, upon seeing the canvas, recognized the expression of the face as very proper to the features of Ugolino as described in the "Inferno." "Sir Joshua," says Northcote, "immediately had his canvas enlarged in order that he might add the other figures, and to complete his painting of the impressive description of the Italian poet."

There have been many opinions expressed about this famous picture, now at Knole, which the present writer knows only from Dixon's print. But all seem to agree that it is the painter's most important contribution to the grand style. As such, perhaps, it merits some detailed notice. Walpole considered it "most admirable." Leslie thought it left nothing to be desired except that it had never been painted, which seems faint praise. "I can conceive," he says, "no finer treatment of the subject." In looking at the work of Reynolds we are entirely absorbed in the story, and yet the art, the whole arrangement, whether of form or colour, or light or shade, seems the best possible. Leslie's admirable collaborator in that work of love which they together produced, Tom Taylor, considers that the picture shows Sir Joshua's "self-denying theory of High Art in the emptiness and poverty of parts of the painting; for example, the dress and head of the fainting son, where subtlety and truth of colour and drawing are both sacrificed. I know of none of his pictures which to my mind better exhibits at once the strength and weakness of the painter."

The "Ugolino" was bought by the Duke of Dorset, who frequently denied himself common necessaries for a man in his position that he might indulge himself in the possession of the best modern pictures. Out of his small income he paid four hundred guineas for the picture, and when it was remarked that it was a large sum to pay for modern production, he replied, "that may be true, but the picture affords me much more pleasure than the money would, and I do not know how it could be better applied."

In the same year, with "Ugolino" was exhibited the "Strawberry Girl," one of those charming studies of girlish beauty which he painted from that year onward. It is a portrait of his niece, Offy Palmer, and is very

accessible now to all Londoners in that precious collection which they owe to the munificence of the late Sir Richard Wallace. This picture is interesting as one which Reynolds himself regarded as among his masterpieces. "No man," he said to Northcote, "ever produces more than half a dozen really original works in his life, and that picture is one of mine."

Dr. Beattie was at this time very famous as the author of the "Essay on Truth," and Reynolds commemorated the fame of that excellent man by a portrait, in which he alludes for the only time, as far as one can discover, to contemporary persons and opinions. Beattie is represented in his doctor's robes, with the book under his arm, while the Spirit of Truth drives away three demons, one of which presents the features of Voltaire, and in another of which the figure might be taken for that of Mr. Hume. Some have given Gibbon a place in the third, but this is unlikely, as he was the painter's friend.

Goldsmith plucked up courage to give Reynolds some excellent advice on the subject of this absurd performance. "It very ill becomes a man of your eminence and character," he said, "to debase so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie. Beattie and his book will be forgotten in ten years, while Voltaire's fame will last for ever. Take heed it does not perpetuate this picture to the shame of such a man as you."

Beattie's account of the painting of the picture is quite interesting. "He painted the head and sketched out the figure in five hours," it seems; "by placing a large mirror opposite my face, Sir Joshua put it in my power to see every stroke of his pencil, and I was greatly entertained to observe the progress of the work, and the easy and masterly manner of the artist, which differs as much from that of all other painters as I have seen at work as

the execution of Giardini on the violin differs from that of a common fiddler." According to Leslie, however, it was Reynolds's practice to paint from the reflection in a glass, though one recalls no other mention of it except in the case of children whom he wished to represent in positions which could only be obtained by such a device.

In the following year, 1774, Reynolds sent no fewer than thirteen canvases to the exhibition of the Academy, and among those some of his very best. There is certainly no finer example of the classical treatment of his feminine sitters than the Misses Montgomery in the National Gallery, known as "Three Ladies decorating a Term of Hymen;" of his domestic subjects, than the delightful "Lady Cockburn and her Children;" of his boyish subjects, than the young Richard Edgcumbe; of his male portraiture, than the Baretti for the Thrale Gallery, and the head, at least, of Dr. Beattie.

We learn from a published letter of Mr. Gardiner, whom he was painting at the time, the origin of the delightful composition of those three beautiful sisters, the Montgomerys. That gentleman was about to marry the central figure of the group, and went to Reynolds with a commission to paint the three sisters together. Mr. Gardiner had expressed a wish that the three ladies should be painted "representing some emblematical or historical subject," but left the choice to the painter and the ladies themselves. "This picture," wrote Reynolds to him in 1773, "is the great object of my mind at present. You have already been informed, I have no doubt, of the subject we have chosen, the adorning a Term of Hymen with festoons of flowers." The subject, by the way, seems appropriate enough, for they were all engaged to be married. "This affords sufficient employment to the figures, and gives an opportunity of introducing a variety of graceful historical attitudes. I have

THE GRACES DECORATING A TERM OF HYMEN

every inducement to exert myself on this occasion, both from the confidence you have placed in me, and from the subjects you have presented to me, which are such as I am never likely to meet with again as long as I live; and I flatter myself that, however inferior the picture may be to what I wish it, or what it ought, it will be the best picture I ever painted."

This is one of those canvases in which the classical manner seems to leave little to regret. For grace of composition, beauty of colour, and the charm of the women presented, it must always take a high place among the works of the painter. It happily became the property of the nation by the gift of Lord Blessington, the son of the Mrs. Gardiner whose marriage with his father it commemorated.

We may take it that the "Lady Cockburn," exhibited at the same time, was another of those pictures which Reynolds considered among his masterpieces. It was one of the two canvases which he signed with his name. On that canvas, as on the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the "Tragic Muse," may be seen the name of the painter running along the hem of the lady's dress in bold letters. The charm of motherhood and of childhood and infancy have seldom been so beautifully presented, even by Reynolds, as in this magnificent painting. It was for ten years on view in the National Collection, but is now in the possession of Mr. Alfred Beit. Tom Taylor tells us that the scheme of colour and the composition were both completed, after anxious deliberation, by the addition of the curtain, the landscape background, and the macaw, which is so prominent an object at the side of the canvas.

This gorgeous fowl was a prominent member of the Reynolds' household, and was more than once introduced into the painter's canvases; it was a very imposing figure, for example, in the portrait of the beautiful Countess

of Derby, painted in 1776. The macaw was no ordinary bird, as appears very plainly from an anecdote related by Northcote. During that painter's student days with Reynolds, he made a portrait of the housemaid whose duty it was to clean after the macaw, duties which apparently resulted in a misunderstanding between herself and the bird. When Northcote's portrait of the maid was brought into the room to show Miss Reynolds, the bird astonished the company by flying at the effigy of his enemy, and attacking it with beak and claw with uncommon fury. It became a recognized item of the social functions in Leicester Fields to introduce the bird to the picture, and Dr. Johnson, Edmund Burke, and other great minds were often amused in that way.

There was another live property at Leicester Fields, a famous golden eagle, which lived disconsolately in the area, and often appeared in the painter's classical subjects. In this very year, the figure of the Infant Jupiter is much enhanced by that of the eagle, which spreads its wings very majestically above the head of the god. We saw it, too, going up the rainbow-path with Miss Meyer a year or two before. The bird died a few years later, and Northcote decided to make a final study of the royal bird.

"I took the body," says he, "and suspended it by strings, so as to give it an action as if it was alive, with its wings spread, intending to paint a picture from it myself. But when Sir Joshua saw me about it he seemed pleased, and told me to do it as well as I was able; and when I had finished the work to the best of my power, he took the picture and the bird into his own painting-room, and in about a quarter of an hour gave it such touches of animation as made it truly fine, though executed in a bad light, for I remember it was late in the day when he did it, having been the night before at

a masquerade, which had occasioned his remaining very long in bed on that day."

If Reynolds had never painted another picture, he would still be acclaimed a master as the painter of the portrait of Mrs. Sheridan as "St. Cecilia," which he exhibited in 1775. The beauty of the sitter, her perfect character, the perfect realization of that character in the painting, all combine to place this admirable picture among the most precious of his works. To all who have read much in the records of that picturesque eighteenth century, the character of Elizabeth Linley seems the impersonation of these feminine qualities for which lovers have sighed through all years. She is surely the chief of the "dear dead women," the women with whom men are in love to-day as they read. The romance of her love for Sheridan, her modesty, the God-given voice, the charm which entranced the men and women of her day from the King down, the brief spell of happiness, the early death; we have all felt this, and it wanted but those touching letters which saw the light in Mr. Fraser Rae's book a few years ago to complete that gracious image. "God love thee as I do, Dick," she wrote to her husband, "and He will give thee a place among his cherubims on the finest cloud in heaven."

The pair had been three years married when Reynolds met them at Mr. Coote's parties; Sheridan possessed at this time nothing but his wits; the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal* had still to be written, and his amazing abilities as an orator were yet to be displayed; but those were probably his wife's happiest years. "She had a way of gathering little children about her, we are told, and singing them childish songs with such a playfulness of manner, such a sweetness of look and voice, as was quite enchanting." It is thus that Sir Joshua presented her at the organ, with Mr. Coote's innocent children

about her as cherubs. Any description of that matchless picture of Lord Iveagh's is superfluous; that gracious figure, reflected from innumerable reproductions, is a national possession. But no other painter than Reynolds could better have preserved for a grateful posterity that enchanting personality which passed away untimely in his own day.

Sheridan had bravely determined that his wife should not sing in public after their marriage; he seems, indeed, to have forbidden any performance even at the houses of their friends. It is, therefore, improbable that Reynolds ever heard Mrs. Sheridan sing. He expressed some annoyance to Northcote that, after he had taken the trouble to provide a harpsichord at Leicester Fields, the lady still remained silent.

We learn from a letter of Reynolds's, written to Sheridan himself in the last years of his life, that the picture remained with the painter, Sheridan being presumably unable to pay for it. That letter seems so characteristic of the kindly Reynolds that we give it at length from Leslie's "Life."

"Leicester Fields, January 20, 1790.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have, according to your orders, bespoke a very rich frame to be made for Mrs. Sheridan's picture. You will easily believe I have often been solicited to part with that picture, and to fix a price on it, but to these solicitations I have always turned my deafest ear, well knowing that you would never give your consent, and without it I certainly should never part with it. I really value that picture at five hundred guineas. In the common course of business, exclusive of its being Mrs. Sheridan's picture, the price of a whole-length with two children would be three hundred; if, therefore, from the

consideration of your exclusive right to the picture, I charge one hundred and fifty guineas, I should hope you will think me a reasonable man.

"It is with great regret I part with the best picture I ever painted, for though I had every year hoped to paint better and better, and may truly say, 'Nil actum reputans dum quid superesset agendum,' it has not been always the case. However, there is now an end of the pursuit; the race is over, whether it is won or lost.

"I beg my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Sheridan.

"I am, with the greatest respect,
"Your most humble and obedient servant,
"JOSHUA REYNOLDS."

In the same year with that splendid "St. Cecilia" appeared a male portrait which was acclaimed by the town as the finest Reynolds had painted—the three-quarter-length of Dr. Robinson, afterwards Lord Rokeby, the Primate of Ireland, now at Christchurch, Oxford. The doctor sits in his robes at a table, turning the leaves of a large book, and looks over his shoulder at the spectator. Walpole was enthusiastic at this picture. "Sir Joshua," he wrote to Mason, "has produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the Primate of Ireland, whom age has softened into a beauty; all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's beggar man." Leslie relates how he possessed a small book of woodcuts, once Reynolds's, in which he discovered the pose of this admirable figure, together with others from which the painter had plainly taken hints for his compositions.

Leslie, reporting a conversation he had with Sir George Beaumont, tells us some interesting particulars of the circumstances in which the admirable portrait of

little Miss Bowles, now in the Wallace Gallery, came to be painted in 1775. The parents intended that Romney should paint the portrait of their little daughter, but Sir George persuaded them to go to Reynolds. "But his pictures fade," was the objection. "Never mind," replied Beaumont, "take the chance; even a faded picture by Reynolds will be the finest thing you can have. Ask him to dine with you, and let him become acquainted with her."

Reynolds sat next the child at dessert, and set himself out to please her with stories and conjuring tricks. The child was so charmed with the kindly painter, that she was delighted to be taken to his house to see him next day, where she at once sat down with an expression full of content. This expression Reynolds at once seized and put upon the canvas in the delightful picture we know, where the little girl hugs the dog in the landscape. It is pleasant to know that the parent's fears as to the fading of the picture were not realized, and that it remains one of the best preserved, as well as one of the most charming, child portraits of the master.

Reynolds's amazing versatility was never better shown than in the exhibition of 1776. There was the well-known portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, at Althorp, the whole-length portrait of that lovely woman descending the flight of steps; the majestic portrait of Lord Temple, which, like Bishop Robinson of the previous year, is among the very finest of his male portraits; a typical feminine portrait, the half-length of his friend the Bluestocking, Mrs. Montague, in which the well-bred charm of that lady is so well presented; the "Child Daniel" at Knole, one of the most touching of his pictures of boyish beauty; and its very foil and antipodes the astonishing whole-length of Master Crewe in the character of Henry the Eighth, the sturdy young urchin with his

RICHARD EARL TEMPLE

legs apart, his thumbs in his girdle, his dogs, and his air of boyish roguery. There is only one other picture of boyhood to be named with this masterpiece, that of the young Don Balthazar Carlos, by Velasquez, at Madrid, with its delicious boyish pride in the new toys, the gun in his hands, and the hounds at his feet.

There were thirteen canvases of Reynolds's in the exhibition of 1777, a year which brings the period we consider in this chapter to a close. Among these was one of those gorgeous feminine full-lengths which are so typical of Reynolds in one of his moods, the Countess of Derby, which, to judge from Dickinson's engraving, must have been dazzling in its splendour, with the beauty of the sitter, the accessories of wreaths of flowers, and the macaw. No one living has seen that picture, which disappeared mysteriously at an early date. The marriage was an unhappy one, terminated by the lady's divorce, and Mr. Graves very plausibly opines that the picture was destroyed by Lord Derby himself upon that unfortunate event.

We have little space to follow Reynolds's pencil in the other canvases of that year—the fine portrait of Lady Bampfylde; the "Boy reading," in the manner of Titian; and many other unnamed portraits—children asleep, fortune-tellers, and what not. But there were two which displayed both his strength and his weakness. The group of the young Duke of Bedford, his brothers, Lord John and Lord William Russell, and their cousin, Miss Vernon, is an affected composition in the mock classic manner, with the Duke as St. George rescuing the young lady from the dragon, and the young Lord William crouching in terror in the corner, and an example of the painter's least happy style. An anecdote is told of the figure of the crouching boy, however, which interests us as an illustration of Reynolds's methods with children.

The child had a horror of being painted, and crouched down in defiance in a corner of the painting-room. "Stay as you are, my little fellow," said the painter, and at once transferred the attitude to his canvas, the only satisfactory passage in the picture. We have Walpole's authority, however, for the statement that the portrait of Miss Vernon as an admirable likeness of that young lady.

That same entertaining critic was moved to enthusiasm by the picture of this year, which we have mentioned as one of Reynolds's happiest efforts—the portrait of the little Lady Caroline Montagu, belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch. She is painted in the snow in her furs, with her dog and her attendant robins, and the picture is one of the most delightful of the painter's presentations of childish innocence. It is pleasant to quote Walpole in his enthusiastic praise of this little lady. "Best of all, delicious, is a picture of a little girl of the Duke of Buccleuch, who is overlaid with a long cloak, bonnet, and muff, in the midst of the snow, and is perishing, blue and red, with cold, but looks so smiling and good-humoured that one longs to catch her up in one's arms and kiss her until she is in a sweat and squalls."

Reynolds's notes are full of memoranda of the methods he employed at this period in the production of the pictures we have noticed among many others. Generally speaking, these have stood well where they have escaped the restorers and the varnishes of the glazing have not been interfered with.

Beechey's commentary upon his practice in these middle years of his life well shows the extreme danger of submitting his pictures to ignorant restorers.

"His colours were only black, ultramarine, and white, so that he finished his picture entirely in black and white, all but glazing—no red or yellow till the last,

which was used in glazing; and that was mixed with Venice turpentine, the resin of the larch, and wax as a varnish. Take off that, and his pictures return to black and white."

"In which state," adds Taylor, "we may be pretty sure to find every Sir Joshua which has passed through the hands of an ordinary cleaner."

There are further endless experiments recorded in the notebooks which had results which could not fail to be disastrous. In 1772 he leaves notes of one of his many portraits painted first with water and "gomma dragone, then with vermilion lake, black without yellow, varnished finally with egg after Venice turpentine." Upon this Haydon remarks, "Heavens, murder, murder! It must have cracked under the brush." Of another experiment that impulsive painter remarks, "It is insanity; he had at his elbow a mocking fiend, gum and whiting, then waxed, then egged, then varnished, and then retouched."

Of Reynolds's favourite wax medium, which had been brought into vogue by Count Caylus's investigations of the practice of the Greek painters, Beechey says—

"This wax was thus prepared: pure white wax scraped into very thin slices, and covered with spirit of turpentine cold. In twelve hours it became a paste. With this and sugar of lead he mixed Venice turpentine, or copaiba, or any balsam. His egg varnish alone would in a short time tear any picture to pieces painted with such materials as he made use of."

Later, in 1775, came other experiments in fatty and waxy matters used with such dangerous materials as asphaltum and red lead, Reynolds then being in search of the thick impasto manner which he adopted later. The whole subject seems hopelessly obscure to the lay mind. Some of the pictures he painted with these

dangerous vehicles appear to have survived in good condition, others have hopelessly faded. There is one very interesting incident on record in this connection. Among the pictures exhibited by Reynolds in 1773 was a charming portrait of Miss Hartley, the actress, as a Nymph with a young Bacchus. This picture came up for sale by auction at Lord Carysfort's sale, where it was bought by Mr. Bentley. A stranger in the room addressed that gentleman, and congratulated him on his purchase, but cautioned him never to let a cleaner touch the picture. He came up a second time and repeated the caution with much earnestness. Then, as if to justify himself for advising so authoritatively, he added, "You may believe I speak with some knowledge when I tell you my name is Thomas Lawrence." This picture is described by those who have seen it as in the very finest preservation. "It is painted in a glowing golden tone, that breathes of the warm south and vintage-sunshine, and being finished throughout by glazing in varnish, would, of course, be destroyed by an application of the cleaner's solvents."

Of the pictures we have selected for mention in this chapter, "Master Crewe" is as fresh as when painted, without a tone faded. We may be thankful, too, that the "St. Cecilia" is in splendid condition.

We must not lose sight of Reynolds's continued attention to his duties as President of the Royal Academy through these years of social intercourse and steady professional labour. He made an ideal president of that august body, and must have been gratified by the continued success of the exhibitions. Whether those exhibitions are to be regarded as cause or effect, they at least marked year by year a steady progress in a truly native art. We may smile now at the favour with which such painters as West and Cipriani, Angelica Kauffmann

and Dance, were regarded in those days. But we may remember, to the credit of the Academy, that side by side with the puerilities of those artists, came to its rooms the portraits and landscapes of Gainsborough, the refined classicisms of Wilson, the designs of Flaxman, the virile *genre* of George Morland, as well as the wealth of the President's own work. As President of the Academy we may be sure Reynolds often congratulated himself upon the difference in artistic matters which he had seen in England since Mr. Hudson and Mr. Cotes represented the high-water mark of portraiture, and a native genius like Hogarth was unregarded except as an engraver of caricature.

His notebooks disclose evidence of Reynolds's continuous interest in the affairs of the Academy; there is hardly an instance when any appointment, professional or social, was allowed to interfere with a council meeting, or a distribution of medals, or the arduous duties of the exhibitions. Of the seriousness with which he regarded his mission as President his laborious preparation of the "Discourses" testifies with much eloquence. He had already reached the seventh of these lectures by the year at which we have arrived. The students in 1771 had listened to his further opinions on the grand style; generalization and not particularization, he told them, was the only secret in enduring art; in the fifth discourse, delivered in the following year, they were allowed some little relaxation from the severity of the grand gusto as displayed by Ludovico Carracci by a cautious use of the ornamental style; in the sixth, delivered in 1774, the virtues of the study of an artist's predecessors and of their imitation is very learnedly presented, and the morality of "borrowing a particular thought, an action, attitude, or figure, and transplanting it into your own work," considered. This has a very interesting

bearing upon Reynolds's own methods, and one quite agrees with his definition of the propriety of the practice. "This," he says, "will either come under the charge of plagiarism, or be warrantable and deserve commendation according to the address with which it is performed." In the seventh lecture, delivered in 1777, he attempted, though with little success, to fix a standard of taste in artistic matters.

During these years, too, Reynolds presided at the annual banquets of the Academy with complete success. There was still a permanent list of great officials invited each year, but other guests chosen, we may assume by the President himself, reflect very pleasantly the life of the times. Sir John Pringle (as President of the Royal Society), Dr. Francklin (the Greek Professor of Cambridge), Duane (the eminent numismatist), Keate (the surgeon), represent very well the intellectual activity of those years; the sister arts were always considered in the invitations sent to such men as Garrick, Colman and Foote, Giardini the violinist; who better could represent the literature of the time than Johnson and Sheridan and Edmund Burke, or fashion and politics than Horace Walpole and Topham Beauclerc, Charles Fox, Crewe, Sir G. Beaumont, Pembroke, Lord Aylesford, and Anthony Storer?

It was at one of these banquets that the ineffable Walpole refused to allow Johnson to be introduced to him. The good-natured Reynolds had already presented Goldsmith, but there Horry determined to draw the line. He himself told the story to Miss Berry. "Sir Joshua said, 'Let me present Dr. Goldsmith to you.' He did. 'Now I will present Dr. Johnson to you.' 'No,' said I, 'for Dr. Goldsmith, pass, but you shall not present Dr. Johnson to me.'"

CHAPTER VII

RELATIONS WITH CONTEMPORARIES

1778–1782

HUMAN nature being what it is, it is not surprising to find that Reynolds's continued success began to excite very human, but also very unworthy, feelings in the breasts of some of his contemporaries. Reynolds at this time occupied a very exceptional position as an artist. Never before had art been so honoured in England as it was in the person of the President of the Royal Academy. His career in London had been one continued professional success, and the social distinction which accompanied it was not less marked. Although politics, and the narrow mind of George the Third, interfered with any special favour at Court, there is no doubt whatever that Reynolds was happy in His Majesty's respect, and that if the King was incapable of estimating the real difference between the President's work and that of West and Ramsay, he had every admiration of Reynolds as a man, and as a stately President of his own Royal Academy.

In private life the position of the painter was no less enviable. His intimate friends were chosen from among the most eminent men of his day, and as year after year brought the pick of social England to his studio, he was accepted by his sitters, both men and women, as their honoured and equal associate.

In all this success there had been no unworthy motives at work, no cringing to the great or despising of the poor. We have only to follow Reynolds as we have done through those early years of incessant labour to be convinced of this; those days of honest work left no time for the exercise of flattery or hunting of tufts. Sitters came to Reynolds because he could paint them better than any one else in London at the time, and they remained his friends because they found him a gentleman of refined manners and honourable feelings. They respected the steady industry which he himself was the last to overrate, and they loved the kindly gentleman who could paint so well and be so tolerant and helpful to others of his craft whom he was passing in the race. It is recorded that from the time of the first exhibition onwards, Reynolds insisted that his own paintings should be hung in inconspicuous places, in order to make room on the line for the canvases of less-known men. He was ever the first to recognize the success of a brother artist. Zoffany sent to the exhibition of 1770 one of those portraits of the players he was so fond of painting, the admirable presentation of Garrick in the character of Abel Drugger. Instead of showing any soreness at Zoffany's success in a subject which he had himself made his own, Reynolds went to the artist and bought the picture for a hundred pounds. Lord Carlisle, half an hour afterwards, saw the picture, and offered Reynolds an advance on that figure. Reynolds immediately surrendered the portrait, and gave Zoffany the enhanced price. He was the first to recognize the genius of his rival Gainsborough, and to purchase what he considered that artist's masterpiece, when it appeared at the exhibition of 1782. No one could induce him to say an evil word of his fellow-artists; he would either refuse to talk of them at all, or would commit himself to the pious fraud of inordinate praise, when

MRS. HARTLEY AND CHILD

pestered by some chatterbox like Northcote. Mme. le Brun's portraits of Marie Antoinette and Mme. de Polignac created much discussion among people interested in painting during their exhibition in London in 1775, and the general opinion was not favourable to those works of art—

> "Where burnished beads, silk, satin, laces, vie
> In leaden lustre with the gooseberry eye;
> Where broadcloth breathes, to talk where cushions strive,
> And all, but Sir or Madam, seems alive."

If this is an accurate description of the portraits, they exhibited the very qualities which Reynolds detested most, and which were most at issue with his own practice and his own theories of generalization in portraiture. And yet, in charity to a living artist, he loaded these same pictures with extravagant praise. "They are as fine as those of any painter, living or dead," he said in answer to Northcote's inquiry as to what he thought of them. "What, finer than Vandyke?" asked Northcote. "Yes, finer than Vandyke," was the answer.

The character of the man which is suggested by these anecdotes, and confirmed by the full knowledge we have of his career, seems an ill subject for the calumnies of his fellow-artists; and yet Reynolds failed to escape them. "Reynolds," says Farington, "suffered much from jealousy among his contemporaries;" and in explanation he tells us the history of an attack made upon Sir Joshua, both in his private character and as an artist, by Mr. Hone, his fellow-academician.

Hone had been a fellow-student with Reynolds in Italy. We have already mentioned a caricature of Hone, made by the painter at Rome, which may perhaps be considered as evidence of some little ill-feeling between the two, even in those early days. If Hone had at any time feelings of envy towards the greater man, these were

not likely to have been diminished by what had happened to each in England. Reynolds was in a position which has been granted to few of his craft. Hone had tried enamelling, miniature painting, and crayon drawing, with little success, and was now turning to portraiture in oils. His failure in this, as compared with the success of his former fellow-student, may have been galling, and we may perhaps in charity remember so much in considering the incredible meanness of his attack upon the President.

He chose the council chamber and the exhibition rooms of the institution of which they were both members for the scene of his attack, and his method was a pictorial libel upon Reynolds, which he had the insolence to send before the hanging committee of the exhibition. There were two distinct reflections upon the President in this production: the one hinted that he was nothing more than a plagiarist and manufacturer of portraits; the other was an offensive allusion to a rumour then current about Sir Joshua's relations with Angelica Kauffmann. Hone represented Reynolds as an old man, with a wand in his hand, performing incantations as a wizard or conjurer. Floating in the air, and pervading the whole composition, were numerous sketches and prints of the works of well-known masters, from which, he suggested, Reynolds had taken ideas for his portraits. The charge, in fact, he thus sought so clumsily to express, was that Reynolds, by a mere manipulation of the ideas and compositions of his predecessors, produced those portraits which had brought him his present wealth and reputation.

The ground upon which the Council rejected the picture, however, was the allusion to Angelica Kauffmann. Among the designs floating in the air was a nude figure, which her fellow-academicians recognized as a representation of that lady. The Council at once desired Hone

to remove the offensive composition, and he was told that he could take away the other works he had submitted for exhibition at the same time. It is quite clear that his offence was the insult to the lady, as the records of the Academy contain no allusion whatever to his libel on the President; it is equally clear that Hone himself was informed where his offence lay.

This is quite certain from the fact that he at once wrote to Angelica, vehemently denying the charge, protesting that nothing was further from his thoughts than to insult a lady whom he esteemed "as the first of her sex in painting, and amongst the loveliest of women in person," and offering to put a beard on the obnoxious figure, or to dress it in male attire. Angelica replied dryly that she could not conceive how her fellow-academicians, who had never before deceived her, should conspire to do so then, and that if they were deceived by his ribaldry, he could not wonder that others should be deceived, and "take for satyr that which you say was not intended."

We may mention here that there is absolutely no evidence of anything but a mild friendship in the relations between Reynolds and Mrs. Kauffmann. Scandal at that day was very busy, and, like many other well-known figures of their time, the pair were placed *tête-à-tête* in a scandalous magazine which dealt in garbage of the sort. But of any authentic evidence which could blot the fair fame of that lady there is absolutely no trace whatever.

Hone did not allow the matter to rest. He withdrew his pictures from the Academy, and opened a private exhibition of his own in May. He renewed his protestations of innocence in a preface to his catalogue, and even went before a magistrate and took affidavit to the same effect; also he painted the figures in his "Conjuror" into something like decency. But although he made no mention of Reynolds throughout, he was

careful to add all the point he could to his sorry sneer at the President. He altered the head of the conjuror into a portrait of Reynolds's model, White the paviour, who had sat for the "Ugolino," and was so well known as his model, and he exhibited another portrait of the man under the title of "St. Paviarius, the head finished, done at one painting from the same man who sat for the 'Conjuror.'"

We are afraid Hone was an ill-conditioned fellow altogether, ever ready to outrage the feelings of other people by gratuitous indecency. He once sent to the Academy a painting of two monks, whom he placed together at a drinking bout, and depicted one of them using his crucifix to stir his Hollands and water. The Council rejected the picture, and insisted on the alteration of this disgusting detail. Hone painted it out, but in fugitive colour, and at his own exhibition the painting was shown in its original state.

Northcote had left Reynolds in 1776. He had been of the President's household for five years, and the connection altogether seems to have been a pleasant one for both. Northcote was twenty-nine, and feeling that he ought, as he said, "to be doing something for himself," and deploring the lack of opportunity in his boyhood, which had prolonged his pupilage beyond the years usually devoted to study, he bravely determined to face the world as a portrait painter. Master and pupil parted in May of that year, with many protestations of friendship. "I hope we shall assist each other as long as we live," said Reynolds, and handsomely acknowledged the service which Northcote had rendered to him. He commended Northcote for his determination to shift for himself, and, in parting, gave him some useful advice upon the subject of portrait painting. "To succeed in your art," he said, "you are now to remember that something

more is to be done than that which did formerly; Kneller, Lely, and Hudson will not do now."

Certainly, with Gainsborough, Romney, and Reynolds himself, all at this moment in large practice in London, there seemed less opening for a portrait painter than twenty-five years earlier, when Reynolds started in his profession with Hudson as his only competitor. But on the whole, we may consider Northcote's bravery justified. He went to Rome, came back without a shilling, and entered upon a career in London which was fairly successful, if not particularly brilliant.

It was Northcote who, failing a more eminent biographer, took up the story of his patron's life, when he found that Burke and Malone, whom the world was watching to begin, failed in that pious office. Northcote's "Life" was the first authentic treatment of a subject which has occupied many able pens since, but there has been no more honest worker in the same field. There are many gaps in his story which have been filled by evidence which has come to light since his day; but we still rely for many of the most illuminating details of the life of Reynolds upon his kindly pen, and upon those "Conversations" of his old age which were preserved by the brilliant Hazlitt.

We shall miss that figure in the room adjacent to the President's studio, where he listened so diligently and reported so discreetly. All that he heard, could we know it, would make an interesting chapter of our book. As it is, he takes us into that household in Leicester Fields as no one else can. Mr. Gibbon comes into the studio to sit for his portrait, being already an intimate of the President, and a noted member of the club and of Reynolds's inner circle of friends. He raises his voice and tells Reynolds that a friend of his has just bought an old casket, in a secret drawer of which he found five

times as much in gold as he had given for the casket. With the gold was a ring wrapped in paper, with the inscription—

"This is the very ring that Queen Elizabeth gave secretly to the Earl of Essex, and which ring he was to send to her at any time of his distress as a token of his sincerity and attachment to the Queen."

One would like to know what became of that ring, and what Mr. Gibbon thought of the accuracy of the voucher.

Later would follow Edmund Burke into the same painting-room, to sit perhaps for the Streatham portrait, and he and Reynolds would fall to discussing their friend. Burke, it is interesting to learn, thought but poorly of those stately periods of the "Decline and Fall." Northcote heard him say that "he disliked the style of writing, and thought it very affected, mere frippery and tinsel." Dr. Porson, too, is quoted as saying on the same subject, "If I had a son, I would make him study his native language, and I would give him as his task every morning a sufficient portion of the pages of Gibbon for him to translate into plain English."

Another day, Northcote would overhear a violent dispute between Goldsmith and Burke about politics, the one being a staunch tory, the other an outrageous anti-courtier. Burke came into the room when Goldsmith was there, full of ire and abuse about the King, and went on in such a torrent of the most unqualified invective that Goldsmith threatened to leave the room. The other, however, persisted, and Goldsmith went out, unable to bear it any longer.

Then Lord Mansfield would take his place in the chair. Reynolds asked him if he thought the portrait he was painting was like. "I cannot tell," replied his lordship, "for I have not seen my own face for thirty years.

My servant always dresses me and puts on my wig, and so it is quite unnecessary for me to look in a glass."

We get glimpses, too, of the unfortunate Fanny. Northcote told Hazlitt that "nothing made Sir Joshua so mad as Miss Reynolds's portraits, which displayed an exact imitation of all his own defects, and she was obliged to keep them out of his way." Fanny was accustomed to copy some of Reynolds's pictures by stealth. She was once thus employed upon a "Nymph and Bacchus." When her brother came suddenly into the library where she was at work, Fanny weakly tried to hide the picture, threw it down, "and the fall caused a considerable part of the face and neck of the portrait to fall from the canvas. Reynolds," says Northcote, rather naïvely, "was greatly surprised, and both he and his sister were both much annoyed."

Reynolds at this period was encountering the full competition of the only two painters of his day who are worthy to be named as his rivals, Gainsborough and Romney, who now both shared what once had been practically a monopoly of his own. This competition doubtless had its effect in reducing the numbers of those sitters who at one time besieged his painting-room, but it assuredly still left him ample occupation in portraiture. It is certain, also, that through all this rivalry the three men respected each other thoroughly, and that on Reynolds's side, at least, there was no bitterness in his thoughts of either. The circumstances were quite calculated to arouse human feelings in Reynolds's mind had that been other than the calm, equal mind which we know. He had held an undisputed title as the chief of his profession until those first wonderful portraits of Gainsborough reached the exhibitions; canvases which now poured into the Academy every year whenever that

hasty personality had not offended himself at some fancied slight of the Council.

As to Romney, he first competed with Reynolds severely in the matter of price, and after his return from Italy in 1775, his portraits competed quite as successfully in the taste of the town. "There were two factions," said old Tyger Thurlow, speaking of this time later, "the Reynolds faction and the Romney faction; I was of the Romney faction." This may have been because Mr. Romney painted a very flattering portrait of his lordship, while one of Reynolds's finest efforts depicted the Chancellor with the black scowl with which he used to brow-beat his contemporaries, from dukes downwards, and with that look of ineffable wisdom which, as Charles Fox said, no living being had ever justified by his conduct. He was also good enough to add that he considered Reynolds "a great scoundrel and a bad painter," in pleasant allusion to the fleeting nature of some of his pigments.

We know little of Reynolds's relations with Romney. It is certain that Romney admired Reynolds beyond measure. When some of his friends disparaged his rival, the generous Romney replied, "No, no; he is the greatest painter that ever lived, for I see in his pictures an exquisite charm which I see in nature, but in no other pictures." A remark of Reynolds, in which he is supposed to have referred to Romney as "the man in Cavendish Square," has often been quoted as evidence of feelings of jealousy towards his rival, but it seems a slender foundation upon which to found such charges.

Of Reynolds's connection with Gainsborough we know more, though their intercourse was very limited. Reynolds, in his relations with the Academy, must soon have recognized the touchy temper of that strenuous individual. Gainsborough was included among the original

ELIZABETH COUNTESS OF DERBY

academicians, though he apparently little relished the honour, and took no notice of summonses to meetings and committees. It was proposed, indeed, at a later date to expunge his name from the list of academicians, on the score of his non-attendance and the listlessness which he displayed in the interests of the body. This was actually done by the Council, but the name was very wisely restored by the Academy in general meeting. We may note, however, that the excellent Gainsborough made no scruple of using the exhibition for the display of his own canvases, which he was accustomed to send in in generous numbers. He remained on the list, and his name was sometimes used as a sort of stalking-horse to annoy Reynolds. Thus on one occasion he was gravely proposed as President, his candidature being supported by a single vote—that of the amiable Mr. Hone, no doubt.

Nevertheless, the two men respected each other thoroughly, and on Reynolds's side, at least, there was nothing but affability and good-breeding. Gainsborough, when he came to town from Bath in 1774, took part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall from the interesting Mr. Astley, for which he paid £300 a year, and there he set up his easel. Reynolds lost no time in calling upon him, but the visit was not returned. Whether Gainsborough had any grievance against Reynolds it is unnecessary to inquire; probably he felt his homely manners unsuitable for the circle in which the courtly President moved. They came closer together later, when Reynolds even sat for his rival, though the sittings, which were interrupted by a serious illness of Reynolds's, were never concluded—an unfortunate result, which was, nevertheless, entirely due to Gainsborough's caprice. At the very end, however, when Gainsborough lay dying, whatever differences that had existed between them were most happily composed. We shall have to watch Reynolds

parting with many of his most distinguished contemporaries; that with Gainsborough seems in some ways the most touching leave-taking of them all.

Meanwhile their professional rivalry continued with great spirit. Each contributed a goodly number of canvases to the exhibitions, and they competed also in sitters and subjects. A dozen canvases was not considered an excessive display of a year's work with either. If Gainsborough, as he sometimes did, refrained from sending at all as a protest against something which displeased him at the Academy, Reynolds was sure to make a special effort to be represented in full strength. Gainsborough was often at issue with the Academy. His was a very strong and independent personality, and he was happy, too, in the patronage of the Court, which was mainly denied to his rival. A grievance in connection with the hanging of a picture he painted for the King, indeed, decided him to withdraw his countenance from the exhibitions of the Academy altogether. A letter he wrote on this occasion displays his temper and the difficulty of dealing with him very happily. Gainsborough had sent with other works the full-length group of the Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth, which was hung, in accordance with the regulations, upon what was known as "the full-length line." Gainsborough was dissatisfied with the position, and wished the picture to be hung lower. He wrote to the committee accordingly, and "begs pardon for giving them so much trouble, but he has painted the picture of the princesses in so tender a light, that, notwithstanding he approves very much of the established line for strong effects, he cannot possibly consent to have it placed higher than eight and a half feet, because the likenesses and the work of the picture will not be seen any higher; therefore, at a word, he will not trouble the gentlemen against their inclination, but will beg the rest of his pictures back

again." The pictures were returned as he wished, and he never again exhibited in the Academy.

We read that both Reynolds and Gainsborough were heard by their fellow-artists admiring each other's pictures before one of the exhibitions. "I cannot imagine how he produces his effects," said Sir Joshua. "Damn the fellow, how various he is!" said Mr. Gainsborough, upon surveying one of Reynolds's large contributions to the collection. It was noticed, too, that the two painters sometimes sent portraits of the same individual to the same exhibition, as if to outdo each other; there was one by each of Colonel Tarleton in that of 1782. In the same year La Baccelli was painted by Gainsborough, and it is certain that she was sitting to Reynolds at the same time. Then there was the famous "Blue Boy" controversy in 1778, the year at which we have arrived. Reynolds, in his eighth discourse, among other advice to his students, laid it down "that the masses of light in a picture ought to be always of a warm mellow colour—yellow, red, or mellowish white; and that the blue-grey or green colours should be kept entirely out of these masses."

It is said that Gainsborough painted the picture of the famous "Blue Boy" as a refutation of these theories. Many competent critics, Leslie and Lawrence among the number, held that the difficulties of the problem were rather evaded than overcome by Gainsborough. He avoided, they say, the large mass of bleak blue, which Reynolds deprecated as the leading light in a picture, by breaking and mellowing it with other tints. They all agree, however, as all must who have seen it, that he produced a magnificent picture.

Reynolds's rivalry was most certainly confined to his own diligence and industry, and he was ever ready to praise Gainsborough with the warmest of his admirers.

He once, indeed, got himself in sad trouble in that very particular. Coming to a meeting of artists at the Turk's Head fresh from seeing a landscape of Gainsborough's which he much admired, in describing its merits, and not noticing the presence of the poor neglected Wilson, he said, "Gainsborough is certainly the first landscape painter now in Europe." "Well, Sir Joshua," said Wilson, "and it is also my opinion that he is the greatest portrait painter now in Europe." Reynolds, as we might be certain he would, apologized for having made the remark in Wilson's presence.

When in 1782 Gainsborough sent his "Girl and Pigs" to the Academy, Reynolds acclaimed it as a masterpiece, and immediately bespoke it at sixty guineas, the price named by the artist. It is stated that he gave Gainsborough an enhanced price of a hundred guineas, as the result of a resale to M. de Calonne. It was quite like Reynolds to have done so, for we have seen him befriending Zoffany in the same way. But we doubt the story, because Gainsborough would hardly have accepted the bounty from Reynolds, and also because, apparently, the picture was in the President's possession much later. Lord Upper Ossory, a few years before Reynolds's death, had asked his advice about a reputed Titian. There was some question of an exchange, and the painter wrote—

"I am thinking what picture to offer in exchange. What if I give Gainsborough's 'Pigs' for it? It is by far the best picture he ever painted, or perhaps ever will."

We have, perhaps, said enough about the relations of these two rivals; let us now turn to the work which Reynolds accomplished during the heat of the rivalry. This included some of his finest. During 1777 he had been very busy with sittings of many members of the Duke of Marlborough's family, and had, indeed, spent the whole of August of that year at Blenheim. He was thus engaged

upon that stately canvas of the duke and his family which was exhibited at the exhibition of 1778.

In that picture we perhaps see the apotheosis of the conversation piece, the composition which was so popular with our forefathers of the eighteenth century. There is certainly no other family piece by an Englishman to compare with it. Some of us have predilections for simpler compositions and less crowded canvas, but if we accept the family picture at all, surely here it is at its best.

There are many interesting stories told about this picture. When Sir Joshua went down to Blenheim to paint in the younger members of the group, the little Lady Anne Churchill, a child of four, on being brought into the room, drew back, caught hold of the dress of her nurse, and cried, "I won't be painted!" The watchful painter immediately transferred a note of the natural attitude of the child to the canvas, where we see her clutching the dress of her eldest sister, just as he had done with the obstreperous young Russell in the Bedford group. To account for this attitude, he placed her next eldest sister with a mask before her face, as if frightening the younger child. This incident is borrowed from an antique gem, but it is as good an illustration as another of Reynolds's facility and resource.

It is said, too, that while he was painting the picture at Blenheim he dropped his snuff about, and the duchess, anxious for her carpet, sent a footman to sweep it up. "Go away," said the painter, with a proper sense of his dignity, "the dust you make will do more harm to my picture than my snuff to the carpet."

Reynolds later, with his usual kindness, lent the canvas to a young painter named Powell, who was often employed in making small copies of his portraits. We learn from Northcote that the unhappy Powell was much

in debt, and that the room where he had removed the picture for copying was assailed by bailiffs. The creditor who seized it was on the point of cutting out the heads with the idea of selling them separately, when Reynolds happily got wind of the danger, and sent the faithful Ralph Kirkley to redeem the picture.

Powell, we are told on the same authority, brought his copy to Reynolds, and was much disappointed at hearing him find fault with the background. "I can make it no better," said he. Reynolds assured him that it was his own composition that displeased him, and not Powell's copy. He afterwards made alterations in the picture.

To the exhibition of 1779 Reynolds sent three of his typical whole-length portraits of ladies, and four other portraits which appear in the catalogue without the names of the sitters. But his chief energies during the previous year were absorbed by his designs for the stained window at New College, Oxford. Of these, the centre-piece of the Nativity, and the three separate figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, appeared at the Academy.

The origin of these pictures is explained in a letter he had written to a Fellow of the College, Mr. Oglander, two years earlier, when the window was first contemplated. At Reynolds's own suggestion, an alteration was made in the stonework of the west window of the chapel, in order to make room for the figures which he had decided to bring into the design.

"My idea is to paint, in the great space in the centre, Christ in the manger on the principle that Correggio has done it in the famous picture called the 'Notte,' making all the light to proceed from Christ. These tricks of the art, as they are called, seem to be more properly adapted to glass painting than to any other kind. This middle space will be filled with the Virgin,

THE MARLBOROUGH FAMILY

Christ, Joseph, and the Angels; the two smaller spaces on each side I shall fill with the shepherds coming to worship; and in the seven divisions below with the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the four Cardinal Virtues, which will make a proper rustic base or foundation for the support of the Christian religion. Upon the whole, it appears to me that chance has presented to us materials so well adapted to our purpose, that if we had the whole window of our invention and contrivance we should not probably have succeeded better."

We learn from Mason that it was intended at first that Reynolds should furnish coloured cartoons for the window in the usual way, but that his habitual use of the brush and palette in his artistic work decided him to work upon canvas with colour as in his ordinary practice. "Jervas, the painter on glass," he said to Mason, "will have a better original to copy; and I suppose persons hereafter may be found to purchase my paintings."

Such was the origin of the "Nativity," over which Reynolds hurried in order to show it at this year's exhibition, to which he managed to send also three of the auxiliary figures, Faith, Hope, and Charity. He was quite right in his prophecy as to the sale of these paintings; the young Duke of Rutland gave him twelve hundred guineas for the "Nativity," and the seven figures sold for nearly three thousand pounds at his niece's sale in 1821. His estate certainly lost nothing by the devotion of much of his energy at this time to this undertaking, but his admirers may well wish that it had been better employed.

Of the "Nativity" we can only judge by the window at Oxford and from the print, the painting having perished in the disastrous fire at Belvoir in 1816. The window is most certainly a failure. Its conception and execution could have made it no other. Putting aside

the false pictorial treatment of a flat and transparent material like the glass and the window, a treatment which suggests a perpetual falsehood, a window illuminated by the light proceeding from a single spot in it is an obvious absurdity. Reynolds himself recognized and deplored his failure.

With the pictures, however, he took infinite pains. Mason called to see him when engaged on the "Nativity."

"Three beautiful young female children with their hair dishevelled were placed under a large mirror," he says, "which hung angularly over their heads, and from the reflection in this he was painting that charming group as angels which surround the Holy Infant. . . . The head of the Virgin in this capital picture was first a profile. I told him it appeared to me so very Correggiesque, that I feared it would throughout be thought too close an imitation of that master. . . . When I saw the picture the next time the head was altered entirely, part of the retiring cheek was brought forward, and, as he told me, he had got Mrs. Sheridan to sit for him."

As a whole, and judging, as we say, from the print, the painting was not a success. Reynolds, as Leslie justly says, was in this work a conscious imitator and plagiarizer of Coreggio; true art must have been absent from a work where the artist was mainly occupied in thinking how another man would have executed it. The passages in the painting representing the innocence of the children, and the womanly beauty which he saw and admired in Mrs. Sheridan, were, no doubt, redeeming qualities; but one cannot but regret the precious months wasted by Reynolds on these paintings when he was at the very height of his power.

There was a prodigious competition for the Virtues when they came up for sale in 1821, though they were all secured by Lord Normanton for £5565. "Fortitude"

had been painted from sittings given by Lady Dudley and Ward; and her son, the third viscount, ran Lord Normanton closely in his unsuccessful attempt to secure the painting, which went for £1575. "Justice" brought £1155.

Reynolds's notable contributions to the exhibition of 1780 were the excellent head of Gibbon; the little Miss Beauclerc as Una with the Lion—a most captivating example of his fancy treatment of a young girl's portrait; the portrait of the Prince William Frederick, son of the Duke of Gloucester, in a Vandyke habit, now in the possession of Trinity College, Cambridge; and the full-length portraits of King George and Queen Charlotte, the result of those sittings which Reynolds extracted from their Majesties. The exhibition of 1780 was the first of those held by the Academy in their new quarters at Somerset House, though the schools and offices had been established there since 1771. This royal portrait was placed in the post of honour opposite the door in the antique Academy, and was among the first of the Diploma pictures which have since been collected by the Academy.

Reynolds's power as a painter was very admirably displayed in one picture, at least, which he sent to the exhibition of 1781—the excellent group of the Ladies Waldegrave. This picture was the result of a commission by Horace Walpole to paint his three nieces, the daughters of the Lady Waldegrave, now Duchess of Gloucester, who had so often sat to Reynolds in earlier years. Humphrey had painted two of these young ladies in 1780, much to Horace's dissatisfaction, as we judge from his remarks in the catalogue—"Both too old, and Lady Horatia not near so handsome as she is." Horace, no doubt, called in Sir Joshua to produce an adequate representation of those ladies. Reynolds certainly made good use of his opportunity; his sitters were beautiful; and

however we may admire his success in the classical treatment of a similar group of beautiful girls in the Misses Montgomery, we must all rejoice that in this picture he presented the ladies in their habits as they lived, and in the occupations which we may suppose sometimes amused them. Lady Laura winds silk on a card in the centre from a skein held by Lady Horatia; Lady Maria, on the right, bends over her tambour-frame. Walpole, we are told, suggested a design—"the Graces adorning a bust of the Duchess as '*Magna mater*'"—but, fortunately, Reynolds's ideas prevailed, and the result is one of the finest, and certainly the most important, of what we may call his domestic groups.

The picture is well known from reproductions from the print by Valentine Green—a print of a rarity, which makes it one of the choicest of the treasures of the collector, and which to-day brings at auction more money than Walpole paid for the painting itself. Much interest was excited at the time by the unfortunate love affairs of these three ladies. Poor Lady Horatia was drooping under the death of the young Duke of Ancaster, to whom she had been affianced; Lady Maria had been jilted by Lord Egremont; while Lady Laura had experienced the same disappointment at the hands of Lord Carmarthen. Some critics see traces of these griefs in the faces of the ladies, though the present writer has been unable to discover it himself in the print at least. It is pleasant to learn, however, that their troubles were repaired later, when they all made prosperous marriages.

Uncle Horace was enthusiastic about the painting while it was in progress and before the bill came in. He was for ever mentioning it in his letters; it was "charming," "very like," he wrote to Mason in 1780. Three years later his views had changed. The hands, Mason was told, "are abominably bad; and though the effect of

the whole is charming, the details are slovenly, the faces only red and white; while Sir Joshua's journeyman, as if to distinguish himself, has finished the lock and key of the table like a Dutch flower painter."

If we may trust Pinkerton, Walpole was betrayed—quite honestly, we are sure—into a palpable misstatement as to the figure he paid Reynolds for this captivating group. "Sir Joshua," wrote Walpole, "gets avaricious in his old age. My picture of the young ladies Waldegrave is doubtless very fine and graceful, but it cost me 800 guineas." Reynolds's price at this period was 150 guineas for a full-length, and there is a note in his price-book showing that Walpole paid him £315 for the Lady Waldegraves. Reynolds clearly only exceeded his ordinary prices by reckoning the full threequarter-lengths of the sitters as whole-lengths. We have little doubt, however, that this is what Horace grumbled at, and that the figure 8 has been read for a 3 by mistake in Pinkerton's account of the transaction.

Reynolds sent no less than fifteen pictures to the exhibition of 1782. Among these were two, at least, of his finest male portraits, the "Lord Thurlow," which we have already mentioned, and the "Colonel Tarleton." There was also one of his finest whole-lengths of women, the portrait of the voluptuous Mrs. Baldwin, wife of the English consul at Smyrna, as the Fair Greek. Mrs. Baldwin was in prodigious fashion at the time, much in request with lion-hunting ladies like Mrs. Thrale, and her beauty the theme of all the letter-writers of the day. The picture at Bowood preserves much of this beauty for us. The lady sits cross-legged, in the Eastern fashion, on a divan in her Smyrniote costume of green silk, wearing a turban, and with her long black hair in plats. She gazes at a miniature in her hand, that of the absent Mr. Baldwin, no doubt.

The "Colonel Tarleton" of this year is well known from the excellent engraving by J. R. Smith. Tarleton was one of the most distinguished of the soldiers who fought in that disastrous war with the Colonies, an ideal leader of light horse, fearless, alert of mind, a notable athlete, adored by his men, feared by his enemies. The painting suggests many of these qualities, and shows Reynolds's complete skill in making the best of unpromising details. The absurd uniform like that of a postilion would have been ridiculous without Reynolds's genius for suggesting other points in his sitter which make us forget his dress. He paints the colonel stooping to adjust his sword, and full of fiery animation again to join in the fight suggested so admirably by the startled horse and the other surroundings of this living, breathing figure.

We must think of Reynolds as much employed during the years ending with 1779 on two canvases which were not exhibited, but which have added so greatly to his fame—the noble groups of the Dilettante Society. Reynolds had succeeded Athenian Stuart as painter to that society as early as 1769. At a meeting of members in January of 1777, Lord Carmarthen, Lord Seaforth, and Mr. George Pitt agreed to sit "either separately or in a group, the size to be at the option of Sir Joshua." It was a rule of the society that members should present their portraits to the society, under pain of a yearly fine of a guinea for "face-money." Such was the origin of the two famous groups yet in the possession of the Dilettantes.

Reynolds was never happier in the presentation of his subject than in his treatment of these two magnificent pictures. That subject was a society of English gentlemen united by a taste for the arts, for good fellowship, and for good living. So we see them taking their generous pleasure with wine and dessert, and exchanging

their ideas about gems, Etruscan vases, and drawings, with which their after-dinner leisure is employed. In the one group Dundas and Seaforth and the Duke of Leeds compare gems or signet rings, while George Greville, Crowle, and Banks clink glasses with much heartiness. In the other the younger members — Taylor, Dick Thompson, and Stanhope — are appropriately grouped together, standing in the background drinking a toast, proposed, apparently, by the former; while Sir Watkin Wynne and Mr. Smith of Heath, Payne Gallwey, and Sir William Hamilton are occupied with one of Hamilton's treasures and with a book of prints dealing with the same subject of classic pottery.

Reynolds in these groups has admirably surmounted the great difficulty of bringing many figures upon one canvas without overcrowding. How excellently the standing figure of Dundas balances the line of six figures sitting at the table in the one must be evident to all who have seen the pictures, or the fine prints which were engraved from them by Turner and Say. The attitude of Smith, who leans across the table, in the other, and the easy swing in the standing figure of Thompson, triumphantly enable the painter to break up a formality which must have been a great obstacle in the successful grouping of seven men where opportunity of suggesting differences in attitude and occupation is so small. The colour, too, is admirable. Reynolds was evidently under the spell of the Venetians, and of Veronese in particular, when he painted these groups. It is a matter of congratulation also that, after some danger at the beginning of the last century, when there were numerous conferences by experts like Lawrence and Bigg as to their cleaning and care, the pictures are in excellent preservation.

Artistic circles were much enlivened in 1782 by the appearance of the redoubtable Wolcot among the critics,

and for some years "Peter Pindar," as he signed himself, added much to the gaiety of each succeeding exhibition by the publication of his "Lyric Odes," in which painters and pictures were very freely handled. Wolcot was the first to discover the talents of Opie, who had been the odd boy about his home in Cornwall, and in 1780 had introduced that young painter to London under a peculiar agreement. Opie was to paint pictures, and Wolcot to write lampoons, and the pair were to share the joint proceeds of this strange partnership. Opie, after the first year, however, found he was getting the worst of the bargain, and withdrew. It may have been Wolcot who introduced young Opie to Reynolds, who was very ready, as always, to recognize the abilities of a new-comer. He enjoyed, indeed, a mild joke at the expense of Northcote, on the subject of Opie's promise. "Ah," said Reynolds to Northcote, who had just come back from Rome without a penny. "You may go back now, you have no chance here. There is such a young man come out of Cornwall." "Good G——, Sir Joshua, what is he like?" "Like! Like Caravaggio, but finer." "I was ready to sink into the earth," said Northcote. Modern taste does not discover in Mr. Opie's pitchy canvases all the merits which Reynolds professed to see in them, but he was at least an honest workman whose industry was rewarded by a modest success.

The removal of the Academy exhibitions to Somerset House gave Wolcot his opportunity, and created the public which read his "Lyric Odes." The annual exhibitions in their new surroundings became each year of more importance, and occupied a greater place in the attention and the conversation of the fashionable world. Magazines and newspapers began to take them seriously, and to devote much space to critiques on the performances of the more prominent artists. To much critical matter

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thus produced Peter Pindar's rhymed dissertations on the same subject formed a very interesting commentary.

Wolcot, indeed, was much the ablest critic of his times, and anticipated many of the judgments which posterity has passed upon the work of his contemporaries. He was able to distinguish between the real merits of Wilson, for instance, and the false qualities of De Loutherbourg, though his judgment was absolutely opposed to the taste of his day.

> "And Loutherbourg, when Heaven so wills
> To make brass skies and golden hills,
> And marble bullocks in glass pastures grazing,
> Thy reputation too will rise;
> And people, gaping with surprise,
> Cry, 'Master Loutherbourg is most amazing'
>
> "But honest Wilson, never mind,
> Immortal praises thou shalt find,
> And for a dinner have no cause to fear.
> Thou start'st at my prophetic rhymes,
> Don't be impatient for those times,
> Wait till thou hast been dead a hundred year."

Poor Wilson's troubles were nearly over in this very year when Wolcot foretold his fame. He died in 1782, at the quiet home near Llanberis, which the death of a brother had placed at his disposal. Till then he had been dependent upon a small salary from the Academy, or upon "the rare sale of a picture, or the proceeds of sketches which kindly individuals like the good Paul Sandby sometimes bought for a few shillings above his market price." His last windfall was due to Reynolds, who procured him a commission for two landscapes from a nobleman at a fair price. Wilson died in comfort at last, and the fame which was so tardy in coming has in our day, as Wolcot foretold, done justice to his great talents as a landscape painter.

Wolcot alluded in very trenchant verses to the

imitators which Reynolds's success had already produced among the younger artists of his time.

> "Sir Joshua's happy pencil hath produced
> A host of copyists much of the same feature
> By which the art has greatly been abused.
> I own Sir Joshua great, but nature greater."

And Wolcot likens the painters to a row of pointers backing the one dog that scents a covey, or to a line of ensigns in the park, all imitating, "the first transfixed by the charms of a fresh imported, active, blooming lass."

> "E'en so the President, to Nature true,
> Doth mark her form, and all her haunts pursue;
> While half the silly brushmen of the land,
> Contented, take the nymph at second hand."

Reynolds often writhed under the persecution of this imitative flattery. Northcote tells us how angry he was with a young painter who brought a copy of one of his pictures, in which the red in the shadows of the face was so exaggerated that the peculiarity, of which he was conscious himself, was mercilessly caricatured. "I had made it bad enough," he said, "but you have made it worse." We all know the red shadow of the nose on the upper lip which appears so often in Reynolds's work as to become a mannerism. His sister Fanny used to imitate this and other weaknesses of his style without the power of reflecting any of its excellencies, to the great disgust of her brother. The same defects appeared in much of the work of Hoppner and Beechey, to say nothing of his own pupils like Northcote and Parry. They even appear in the earlier works of Lawrence, and, as some think, constitute the chief charm of what was his best work.

We do not know how Reynolds regarded Wolcot; they certainly met more than once, and were apparently good friends. On the whole, Wolcot did the great

painter justice, and we may hope that he appreciated his able criticism at its proper worth. One has doubts, however, upon reading the ease with which Reynolds swallowed Thomas Warton's ridiculous praise of the New College window. The splendour of that performance, said the ingenious author, had converted him from his love of the storied windows of earlier times—

> "Thy powerful hand hath broke the Gothic chain,
> And brought my bosom back to truth again;"

and he goes on to ridicule the subjects of old windows, their style and colour, and to declare that it had been reserved for Reynolds alone—

> "With arts unknown before, to reconcile
> The willing graces to the Gothic pile."

We would fain hope that there was nothing more than politeness in Reynolds's reply to this ill-judged eulogy.

"London, May 13, 1782.

"DEAR SIR,

"This is the first minute I have had to thank you for the verses which I had the honour and pleasure of receiving a week ago. It is a bijoux, it is a beautiful little thing, and I think I should equally have admired it if I had not been so much interested in it, as I certainly am. I owe you great obligations for the sacrifices which you have made, or pretend to have made, to modern art. I say pretend; for though it is allowed that you have, like a true poet, feigned marvellously well, and have opposed the two different styles with the skill of a connoisseur, yet I may be allowed to entertain some doubts of the sincerity of your conversion. I have no great confidence in the recantation of such an old offender.

"It is short, but it is a complete composition; it is a whole. The struggle is, I think, eminently beautiful.

"'From bliss long felt unwillingly we part;
Ah, spare the weakness of a lover's heart.'

"It is not much to say that your verses are by far the best that ever my name was concerned in. I am sorry, therefore, my name was not hitched in the body of the poem. If the title-page should be lost, it will appear to be addressed to Mr. Jervas.

"I am, dear sir, with the greatest respect,

"Your most humble and obedient servant,

"J. REYNOLDS."

Mr. Warton duly made the suggested alteration in the second edition by introducing Reynolds's name.

In the summer of 1778, Reynolds, being at Streatham with the Thrales, had the good fortune to meet the incomparable Fanny Burney, at that moment a very considerable figure in London society. Fanny had published her novel of "Evelina" in January of that year, and having with much shrewdness contrived to make a mystery of the authorship of that masterpiece, which was in reality no mystery at all, she was enabled to blush and giggle at each succeeding discovery of the secret throughout a whole season, and to play the frightened fawn with much success, and to her own great content. The great minds of that day all agreed that never was such a masterpiece as "Evelina." Gibbon, Johnson, Burke, Sheridan, Reynolds himself, all ignored "Tom Jones," and "Amelia," and "Tristram Shandy," and "Clarissa Harlowe," and declared, with one voice, that life, character, sentiment, pathos, were all displayed at their high watermark in English fiction in the pages of "Evelina."

Few of us read "Evelina" now, but we are all grateful for the diary in which Miss Burney recorded her feelings, and the doings of the choice circles in which,

If we are to believe her, those feelings were so often on the rack. She came to Streatham well disposed towards Reynolds, we may be sure. It had been whispered from one feminine ear to the other that the great painter had happened upon "Evelina," and had been so annoyed at having to put it down and go into his painting-room, that he had been moody and sulky all day, and had flown to the precious volume again as soon as he could with conscience lay down his pencil and palette. Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Thrale had even, it was said, conceived a plan of uniting the liberal arts by a marriage between Reynolds and the blushing authoress.

At Streatham Reynolds happened to mention that he would give fifty pounds to know the lady who wrote "Evelina." "You shall soon have your wish," says Mrs. Thrale, "for she is here this afternoon." Fanny duly appeared with the other ladies, and Reynolds went off and extracted the momentous secret from Thrale, while the ladies performed the same rite with his wife. This was the orthodox ritual in the early part of 1778 in the worship of "Evelina."

Fanny was good enough to go home and record her impressions of Reynolds. "His countenance is expressive, soft, and sensible; his manners gentle, unassuming, and engaging. He several times spoke to me, though he did not make love." Reynolds was fifty-five at that moment, and Fanny twenty-six. There was much bowing and scraping when Reynolds and his nieces went away. Sir Joshua approached her "with the most profound respect," and hoped, when she left Streatham, he would have the honour of seeing her in Leicester Fields. Offy and her sister solicited the same honour as the greatest of all favours.

The description of that meeting at Leicester Fields, which duly took place in December, is one of Fanny's

finest efforts. It interests us as a picture of one of the President's assemblies, which were very notable functions at this time, though Fanny herself is the central figure. Fanny's father was there, Mrs. Cholmondeley and her husband and daughters, William Burke, Lord Palmerston, Mr. King, the Hornecks, and young Mr. Gwatkin, whom Fanny notices making sheep's eyes at Offy, whom he presently married.

Fanny arrived first, and found Offy and her sister alone. "No pointed speech was made, and no starer entered." These were to come later. Reynolds came in, and, after "paying his compliments to everybody," brought a chair next to Fanny's. "So you were afraid to come among us," said he. "He went on saying I might as well fear hobgoblins, and that I had only to hold up my head to be above them all. After this address," continues Fanny, "his behaviour was exactly what my wishes would have dictated to him for my own ease and quietness, for he never once alluded to my book, but conversed rationally, gaily, and serenely; and so I became more comfortable than I had ever been since the first entrance of the company."

But those delicious tremors which Fanny relished so much were to come presently, and she records for us every blush, wriggle, and "te hee" of that rapturous afternoon. "A violent rapping bespoke, I was sure, Mrs. Cholmondeley;" and Fanny ran from the standers, and, turning her back to the door, looked over Miss Palmer's cards, as Peg Woffington's good-natured sister entered. What followed must be related in Fanny's own words.

"I curtsied in silence; she curtsied too, and fixed her eyes full on my face, and then, tapping me with her fan, she cried—

"'Come come, you must not look grave upon me.'

"Upon this I te-he'd; she now looked at me more earnestly, and, after an odd silence, said abruptly—

"'But is it true?'

"'What ma'am?'

"'It can't be true; tell me, is it true?'

"I could only simper.

"'Why don't you tell me? But it can't be—I don't believe it; no, you are an impostor——'

"Then Sir Joshua, taking hold of her arm, attempted to pull her away, saying—

"'Come, come, Mrs. Cholmondeley, I won't have her overpowered here.' I love Sir Joshua much for this," adds Fanny. "But our heart goes out to Mrs. Cholmondeley, who, turning to him, said with quickness and vehemence—

"'Why I ain't going to kill her; don't be afraid.'"

We have no space in which to follow that timid lady through the other incidents of that afternoon; to feel her little heart beating when Lord Palmerston questioned Reynolds about Mr. Huddesford's pamphlet, "Warley," dedicated to him, and containing an indiscreet allusion to Fanny and the painter; to watch her leave-taking when she protests that, had she known of such a party, she could never have come. What her real feelings were we can guess. It was only a week or two later that she accepted an invitation of her chief tormentor, Mrs. Cholmondeley, and met the same party over again, with the addition of Mr. Sheridan, who protested that he would take a play of hers unseen and produce it at his theatre, "and make her a bow and his best thanks into the bargain."

Fanny is delightful, but we like, just as well as her full accounts of herself and her feelings, those other records of Reynolds's kindly hospitality at Leicester Fields, which we may read in Hannah More's letters, or

Mr. Boswell's vivid pages. Johnson would be in rare spirits, under the genial influence of Garrick's presence, as Hannah opines, and would come to greet that lady with the macaw on his wrist. There would be what her sister Sarah described as a "peppering match" between the Doctor and Hannah, in which "the old genius was extremely jocular, and the young one very pleasant; and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was the highest seasoner," writes Sarah. On another day she would be at the villa at Richmond with a very agreeable party, select, though much too large to please Hannah. We read of Gibbon, Eliot, three Burkes, Lord Mohun, and Garrick, and of "a great deal of attacking and defending with much wit and good humour."

It was in this very year of 1778 that the only semblance of a huff between Johnson and Reynolds is recorded. Johnson, much earlier, had written to Boswell, saying that "Reynolds has taken too much to strong liquor, and seems to delight in his new character." Reynolds at subsequent meetings explained his use of wine. "At first the taste of wine was disagreeable to me, but I brought myself to drink it, that I might be like other people. . . . I am," he said, on another occasion, "in very good spirits when I get up in the morning. By dinner-time I am exhausted; wine puts me in the same state as when I get up, and I am sure that moderate drinking makes people talk better."

Johnson, we imagine, was no very impartial judge of moderate drinking; he could not trust himself, as we saw, and became an abstainer after the breakdown in Devonshire. On only one subsequent occasion did he taste wine, and then to celebrate the knighthood of the friend in whose company he had been overcome. The passage of arms took place, in connection with this same subject of moderate drinking, at a dinner at General Paoli's in

778. Reynolds then and there defended the practice f moderate drinking, and confessed that, in his own ase, "to please one's company was a strong motive." 'he discussion was closed in the true Johnsonian manner. I won't argue with you any more, sir," said the doctor; you are too far gone." "I should have thought so, ndeed, sir," replied the painter, "had I made such a peech as you have now done." Johnson, as Boswell ays, at once admitted his error with a blush. "Nay, lon't be angry; I did not mean to offend you."

It was at meetings of this sort, rather than amidst the not very exciting amenities recorded by Fanny, that one ikes to think of Reynolds during these years of his eisure and success, meetings where the wits of those good friends were allowed full play, and any little asperities that occurred served only to heighten the charm of their good fellowship with a little welcome piquancy. It was of such a meeting that Lawyer Dunning spoke when he came into the dining-room at Leicester Fields. "Well, Sir Joshua, and who have you got to dine with us to-day? The last time I dined with you in your house the assembly was of such a sort that, by G—d, I believe all the rest of the world were at peace for that afternoon at least."

It was Reynolds who was chosen to bell the cat, by taking that famous round robin to Johnson when Burke and Sheridan, Gibbon and Warton, and the rest thought the Doctor's epitaph on their friend Goldsmith failed to do that gentle spirit complete justice, though Reynolds himself was in bad odour with the oracle from having lost the copy. We know how Reynolds was received with good humour, though Johnson refused at once to "consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English inscription." For the rest he consented "to alter the epitaph in any way the gentlemen pleased as

regarded the sense." He would have thought, however, that "'Mund Burke" would have had more sense, and wondered "that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, could be such a fool."

Little as Reynolds professed any interest in politics, there was an event in 1779 that certainly stirred his placid nature to its depths. On February 12 he wrote to his lifelong friend Keppel a letter, containing these sentences—

"Amidst the rejoicings of your friends, I cannot resist offering you my congratulations for the complete victory you have gained over your enemies. We talk of nothing but your heroic conduct in voluntarily submitting to suspicions against yourself in order to screen Sir Hugh Palliser and preserving unanimity in the navy, and the kindness of Sir Hugh in publishing to the world what would otherwise have never been known.

"Lord North said of himself that he was kicked upstairs; I will not use so harsh an expression, but it is the universal opinion that your court-martial is unique of its kind. It would have been thought sufficient if you had had no honour taken from you—nobody expected that you would have had more heaped on a measure already full.

"My opinion in these matters can be of very little value, but it may be some satisfaction to know that this is the opinion of all parties and men of every denomination. Whatever fatigue and expense this business has occasioned, is amply repaid you in additional honour and glory; and I hope you begin to think yourself that you have had a bargain."

That letter commemorates the triumphant acquittal of Keppel by the court-martial which sat at Portsmouth to inquire into the engagement with the French off Ushant in July of the previous year. The English fleet

ınder Keppel, but with the rear under Palliser, had ıad a warm engagement with the enemy which had ıecessitated a cessation of the action for repairs. Keppel hen signalled the fleet to renew the attack. The van beyed, but Palliser with the rear took no notice, and the French escaped under cover of the night. Keppel, willing o screen Palliser, wrote home a despatch, in which he eemed to take most of the blame to himself. Public pinion, however, attacked Palliser, who thereupon called ıpon Keppel to exonerate him. Keppel refused; Palliser ccused his chief of misconduct and neglect of duty, and Keppel on these counts was brought to a court-martial. The whole business was a political one, and an example of the paralyzing rancour which politics may introduce nto the services, and that in the face of the enemy. Palliser vas of the Court faction, Keppel a noted Whig, and the riginal difficulty off Ushant would not have occurred had he discord of heated politics been absent.

Keppel was surrounded at the trial by the flower of he Whig party—Portland, Richmond, Rockingham, Fox, Burke, Sheridan—and was defended by the Whig lawyers, Dunning, Lee, and Erskine. The admiration in which he vas held appeared even in the evidence of the witnesses alled by the prosecution, and in the demeanour of the udges themselves. When a signal gun spread the news hat he was acquitted, there followed a scene that has few ounterparts in English history. The royal ships saluted ınd cheered, the East India fleet at the Mother Bank ired nineteen broadsides, cheering crowds filled the treets and the windows, bells were rung, and bonfires blazed on the heights, for joy at the escape of a beloved dmiral from the fate which had befallen Byng. In London a mob, led by the young Duke of Ancaster, and ncluding young Mr. Pitt and Mr. Rogers, afterwards known as a law-abiding banker and poet, broke the

Admiralty windows, gutted Palliser's house in Pall Mall, and burned his furniture, which they threw out of the back windows into St. James's Square. Such were some of the fruits of the political system of George the Third and Lord North. Reynolds commemorated the event by painting some admirable portraits of his friend. Lee and Dunning, who had defended Keppel, both returned their fees of £1000; Erskine, with a family to support, and at present without the eminence in his profession which came later, being too poor to follow their example. Keppel then sat to Reynolds for portraits of himself to present to these good friends and to others of his admirers. These went to Burke, to Lee, to Dunning, to Keppel's brothers, the Bishop of Exeter and the Earl of Albemarle. Of the portrait which went to Burke that statesman wrote many years later—

"It was painted by an artist worthy of the subject, the excellent friend of that excellent man from their earliest youth, and a common friend of us both, with whom we lived for many years without a moment of coldness, of peevishness, of jealousy, or of jar, to the day of our final separation."

The record of the life of a man who has reached his fifty-sixth year must necessarily be the record of the severing of many old ties and of sorrow for old friends who were dropping by the way. Reynolds's pocket-book for January 20, 1779, contains the simple entry, "Mr. Garrick," the epitaph of the friendship between the two men which had lasted for nearly twenty years. On that day Reynolds joined the goodly company which followed the great actor to the Abbey, a company which surely represents to the full the intellect and eminence of the times. Fox, Burke, Dunning, Johnson, Althorp, Bunbury, Colman, Beauclerc, and Gibbon, with Reynolds himself, went from the club; and the procession included

twenty-six coaches full of notable men—the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Spencer, Lord Upper Ossory, Lord Palmerston, Hans Stanley, Barré and Rigby, Grey, Cooper, Cumberland, Fitzmaurice and Mills; of clergy, physicians, men of science, authors, artists, and actors. The England which had bestowed a fortune upon that little great man in exchange for the art with which he had delighted two whole generations was surely not grudging in the honour which it did to his memory. It is little wonder that the Court scribes pleased themselves at the splendour of his obsequies, and pointed out with glee how greatly it exceeded those of their great opponent Chatham.

Reynolds's best memorial of his friend is in the three or four canvases in which he preserved for us so much of the great player's character, and in those delightful dialogues in which he has so well suggested the actor's relations with Johnson. How could the virtues and the faults of each be better presented than in those supposititious debates where the Doctor alternately defends and chastens his *protégé*, the man whom he would suffer none to praise or to blame but himself? Those papers, so happily rescued by Lady Thomond, seem worth every word upon art that Reynolds ever put upon paper. Like his paintings, they came from his heart, and not from his head. It is Addison alive again, diffusing the warm glow of his own nature over the virtues and the failings of his friends.

The household in Leicester Fields lost one of its most sprightly inmates when, in 1781, the ogles which Fanny Burney had noted two years earlier had been duly succeeded by more serious symptoms, and young Mr. Gwatkin, the Cornish squire, carried away the prize among the good wishes of all their acquaintance. Offy was very close to the heart of her uncle, we may be quite sure. "I never was a great friend to the efficacy of

precept," he wrote to her a year or two earlier, "nor a great professor of love and affection, and therefore I never told you how much I loved you for fear you should grow saucy upon it." There were a ring and a bracelet with the same letter, and Offy was to take which she liked, and to be careful not to tell her elder sister that she had had the choice.

Burke was at Reynolds's elbow in 1781 while the painter was composing his epithalamium, and added one of his own. "I have the honour to wish you joy with great sincerity," he wrote, with many more kind phrases, "many happy years, and a long succession." It is pleasant to know that the blessing of that great man was abundantly fulfilled, and that Offy lived till near ninety, to see her children's children, and to preserve to the very last those qualities of cheerful affection which so fascinated her early friends.

We miss any congratulatory effusion from Dr. Johnson on Offy's marriage, which may be explained perhaps by a story which the lady many years later related to Haydon. Johnson, she said, hated her because as a girl at one of her uncle's parties, she had changed her dress after all the company had gone, with the exception of the Doctor. He roared at her for showing less respect to him than to the fine people who had left. Johnson apparently never forgave her. Some time afterwards she offered Goldsmith some surprising particulars of a canary of hers for his work on "Animated Nature" then in preparation. The bird, it appears, had turned black after dying of fright. Goldsmith, much interested, proposed to make use of this curious information. "Sir, if you do," said Johnson, "you'll ruin your work, for depend upon it, it's a lie."

Reynolds's household was henceforth under the management of the elder sister, Mary Palmer, who

became in due time Lady Inchiquin and Marchioness of Thomond. From all we know of that lady, she fulfilled that duty admirably, and consoled her uncle for the loss of Offy. She certainly inherited a large part of his fortune. Poor Fanny Reynolds, we think, had left her brother finally in or about 1778. In the following year Johnson wrote a letter to the poor lady at a house in Dover Street, where, apparently, she was then living, deprecating some querulousness on her part, and promising to repeat good offices which he had already performed between herself and her brother. She died at her house in Queen's Square, at the age of eighty, in November, 1807.

Of Reynolds's routine during the five years we consider here, we must think as always, of steady labour in the painting-room from ten till four, the evenings invariably devoted to conviviality, the summers and autumns diversified more often than formerly by journeys into the country from one big house to another, or by occasional trips abroad. We see him at Belvoir, in 1779, the guest of the young Duke of Rutland, whose duchess and children he painted, and who bought so freely of his paintings, all of which, however, were lost in that disastrous fire when the castle was burned in 1816. Lord Ossory has left record of another visit of Reynolds to the country shortly before this time, where he met Garrick and Gibbon, which was typical of many others under that nobleman's hospitable roof.

"He and Mrs. Garrick have been with us in the country," wrote Lord Ossory; "Gibbon and Reynolds at the same time—all three delightful in society. The vivacity of the great actor, the keen sarcastic wit of the great painter, mixed up well together, and made a charming party. Garrick's mimicry of the mighty Johnson was excellent."

Reynolds often now made other visits to the country, where we need not follow him. He was at the various camps which the fears of invasion called into existence in 1778; at Warley with Langton, at Coxheath in Kent, and at Winchester as the guest of Warton, where he met also Lord Palmerston, Garrick, and Hans Stanley. In 1780 he spent part of August and September in his native county, visited Keppel at Bagshot, and made the usual round of his Devonshire friends at Saltram, Mount Edgcumbe, and Port Eliot.

A longer expedition was that of two months which he made to the Continent in 1781 with his friend Metcalfe. He has left a meagre diary of this journey, together with some very interesting notes of the pictures he saw, which were afterwards published by Malone. He also wrote letters to Burke with his impressions of the Low Countries. He was much struck with the labour of the Dutch in resisting the inroads of the sea, which he thought "reached the sublime," and by the freshness and beauty of the greenery of that pleasant country. "As to pictures," he writes, "Rubens reigns here and revels; his pictures of the 'Fallen Angels' and the 'Last Judgment' give a higher idea of his genius than any other of his works." But Dutch art generally did not appeal to him. "Dutch pictures are a representation of nature just as it is seen in a camera obscura. After having seen the best of each master, one has no violent desire of seeing any more."

We note as incidents of this journey that Antwerp was noticeable for its "dirty finery and fine streets;" that at Mechlin, at the Stork Inn, "we had no milk to our tea." At Rotterdam "everything artificial," and at the Hague "milkpails and boats through the meadows were striking features." Cologne, apparently, with its Gothic art, did not appeal to him in the least, for he notices only Rubens's "St. Peter"; between Cleves and

Düsseldorf he encountered "Robbers in a Wood," unless, indeed, this is some scanty note of a picture he had seen. Metcalfe was a patient amateur, who stood for hours in picture galleries, while Reynolds took long notes of the pictures he saw. Northcote says that upon his return to England the painter thought his own works generally wanted force in comparison with Rubens, of whom his eye was then full. But on a second visit to the Continent, made two years later, Reynolds noticed less difference. He curiously attributed this fact to the absence of the glaring white pages of the notebook which he had used in studying the master on his first visit, the contrast of which, he thought, much heightened the effect of the paintings.

CHAPTER VIII

BARRY'S ATTACK UPON REYNOLDS

1783–1787

REYNOLDS, in 1783, attained his sixtieth year. Although he began that year in good health and spirits, as we are carefully assured by many of his friends, he had but just recovered from a serious illness. In the previous November he had sustained another attack of paralysis, which, although it seems to have left him little the worse, must have been a reminder to him of his advancing age, and was the occasion of much solicitude among his friends. This was well reflected in a letter Johnson wrote to him from Brighthelmstone on the 14th of the month—

"DEAR SIR,

"I heard yesterday of your late disorder, and should think ill of myself if I had heard of it without alarm. I heard likewise of your recovery, which I sincerely wish to be complete and permanent. Your country has been in danger of losing one of its brightest ornaments, and I of losing one of my oldest and kindest friends; but I hope you will still live long for the honour of the nation; and that more enjoyment of your elegance, your intelligence, and your benevolence is still reserved for,

"Dear sir,

"Your most affectionate, etc.,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

The stroke, though serious, was not of long duration. By the advice of his doctor, Reynolds went to Bath, where he seems to have remained for a bare fortnight; but his practice was interrupted for a longer period, as he has left no record of any appointments with sitters until December 7. His niece, away in Devonshire, hurried back on hearing of her uncle's illness, only to find that he had recovered. Fanny Burney met him soon after at Miss Monckton's, and reports him in his usual spirits.

Fanny, indeed, is eloquent about the painter, and discusses him in many aspects in letters she wrote to her sister. She had just published "Cecilia," and, as in duty bound, the town was again in raptures. Reynolds, who "looked vastly well, and as if he had never been ill," was extremely kind in reporting these raptures to the grateful ear of the little authoress. Mrs. Montague and the Duchess of Portland had read it with enchantment; Mrs. Dealny was only satisfied by reading it three times; Reynolds declared the club would talk of nothing else for three hours; Gibbon had read the whole five volumes in a day; Burke declared that to have been impossible, for it took him three whole days, and he never parted with the book.

One wonders whether Reynolds and the rest of these knowledgeable men had not their tongues in their cheeks during a good deal of this adulation of Miss Burney. In any case, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion that their personal admiration for Fanny blunted their critical faculties in their estimate of her novels, or, as is more likely, led them to make somewhat of a fool of that prim lady by their inordinate praise. Our doubts in this matter are suggested by a disquieting paragraph in one of Northcote's conversations, reporting a serious admission by the great Panjandrum himself. Opie told Northcote that he had asked Johnson during a sitting

whether it was true, as reported, that "he had sat up all night to read Miss Burney's new novel?" "I never read it through," replied Johnson, "though I do not wish this to be known." Northcote adds, "Sir Joshua also pretended to have read it through at a sitting; but it appeared to him an affectation on the part of both, though it was, no doubt, the partiality of friendship."

However, the affectation pleased Fanny mightily, and made her very confidential and communicative, to our great advantage in tracing her intimacy with Reynolds. Her letters are full of tender little details of their meetings—how Sir Joshua wished to see her home from some assembly or other; how she coyly refused; how "he pressed the matter a good deal, drolly saying, 'Why, I'm old enough, ain't I?'" Then we are told that he saluted her with a kiss at Christmas at Lady Gideon's, and presented her to Mr. West. She writes his name on a paper in some after-dinner game, and there is a struggle for the relic; examines his snuff-boxes, and wonders why he likes the shabby tin one and not the gold; and repeats "dear Sir Joshua's" virtues and sayings by the ream to Sissy at home. Little marvel that Sissy begins to wonder how much is in it all, and says as much in one of her letters to Fanny.

"How, my dearest Sissy," replies Fanny, "can you have any wishes about Sir Joshua and me? A man who has had two shakes of the palsy! What misery should I suffer, if I were only his niece, from a terror of a fatal repetition of such a shock. I would not run voluntarily into such a state of perpetual apprehension for all the wealth of the East."

Reynolds's illness left no traces in his work, nor does it seem to have diminished in the slightest his stock of energy or his powers of application. It was noticed, indeed, that his interest and zeal in his profession were as

MRS. SIDDONS AS THE TRAGIC MUSE

great during this later portion of his life as at any time in his career. His niece, Miss Palmer, writing to her cousin Johnson in Calcutta a year or two later, says—

"My uncle seems more bewitched than ever with his pallet and pencils. He is painting from morning till night, and the truth is that every picture he does seems better than the former."

Certainly the last years of his life were rich in great effort and accomplishment. Those were the years of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse, of the groups of Lady Honywood and Lady Dashwood, of the Miss Kemble, of Mrs. Abington as Roxalana, of the Duchess of Devonshire with her baby, the Lady Spencer in a straw hat, of the exquisite cherub heads in the National Gallery, of the admirable male portraits of Dr. Bourke, of Charles Fox, Joshua Sharpe, John Hunter, and the Duke of Orleans, to name no others.

Of these, Mrs. Siddons claims first notice. Reynolds seems to have met the great actress, then twenty-eight, at Miss Monckton's at the end of 1782. She had just made her second appearance in London, and had captivated the town in the part of Isabella. Mrs. Siddons was happy in the approbation of Miss Burney.

"She is a woman of excellent character," says Fanny, "and therefore I am glad she is thus patronized, since Mrs. Abington and so many frail fair ones have been thus noticed by the great. She behaved with great propriety, very calm, modest, quiet, and affected. She has, however, a steadiness in her manner and deportment by no means engaging. Mrs. Thrale, who was there, said, 'Why, this is a leaden goddess we are all worshipping; however, we shall soon gild it.'"

Reynolds soon became intimate with the Siddons family, and there are frequent notes of engagements at their house in his pocket-books. We are told that both

he and Gainsborough were anxious to paint the actress—a happy rivalry which produced both the Tragic Muse and that silvery presentation of the lady in the National Collection. Mrs. Siddons came to Reynolds to consult him about the dress to wear as Lady Macbeth, and that in which she appeared in the sleep-walking scene is of his design. She began to sit for him in 1783, and the portrait was completed in the following spring, in time for the Academy Exhibition.

There are several stories of the origin of this famous picture. It seems pretty certain that the attitude was first suggested to Reynolds by his memory of Michael Angelo. The upraised arm is that of one of the great painter's prophets, and the two attendant figures with the dagger and bowl prove also that Reynolds, when he painted the picture, had the Sistine Chapel in mind. On the other hand, Mrs. Siddons told Mr. Phillips that the design was "the production of pure accident. Sir Joshua had begun the head and figure in a different view; but while he was occupied in the preparation of some colour she changed her position to look at a picture hanging on the wall of the room. When he again looked at her, and saw the action she had assumed, he requested her not to move; and thus arose the beautiful and expressive figure we now see in the picture."

There is another story also attributed to Mrs. Siddons by Miss C. Fanshawe, in a manuscript diary quoted by Leslie. This lady, who knew Mrs. Siddons personally, states, on that lady's authority, that the painter "led her to the chair, and desired her to choose her own position." Mrs. Jameson, too, quotes the actress as describing Sir Joshua taking her by the hand and leading her up to the platform with the words, "'Ascend your undisputed throne; bestow on me some idea of the Tragic Muse.' Upon which she adds, 'I walked up the steps, and

instantly seated myself in the attitude in which the Tragic Muse now appears.' "

The matter is not of vast importance; whatever its origin, the idea resulted in a magnificent picture. We have it on Miss Fanshawe's authority that it was the portrait which alone pleased the great actress herself. She, it appears, claimed some share in the success. She told Sir Martin Shee that "Sir Joshua would have tricked her out in all the colours of the rainbow" had she not prevented him. Miss Fanshawe has a passage which seems to corroborate this. "I admired," says that lady, "the sober grandeur of the colouring—almost an absence of colour—which contributed to the sublimity of that noble composition. She told me that she was almost upon her knees to him not to disturb those noble hues by a variety of rich and glowing colours, which he would otherwise have introduced."

It is probable that Mrs. Siddons, with her natural ignorance of technical processes, may have been deceived by the freshness of the colours in some of the stages of the painting; it is certainly improbable that Reynolds would have taken advice from a sitter as to his scheme of colour. He may, however, have accepted her advice, as the best of all judges, on such details as the likeness, and an anecdote communicated to Tom Taylor by the Marchioness of Westminster has interest in that connection. "Once when looking at the picture at Grosvenor House," says Taylor, "Mrs. Siddons told the Rev. John Sandford that Sir Joshua intended to work considerably more on the face. When he told her this, on her rising from her last sitting, she answered that she thought it could not be improved. On his showing her the finished picture, he said he had taken her advice, and had not touched on the face since she last sat for it."

The picture is too well known to require any descrip-

tion. There are two canvases identical in treatment, the original in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, and the replica at Dulwich Gallery. It is certain that Reynolds himself considered the Tragic Muse among his masterpieces, for, as in the case of the Lady Cockburn, he signed his name in bold letters on the edge of the lady's skirt, with the courtly remark, "I could not lose the honour this opportunity afforded me of going down to posterity on the hem of your garment."

Reynolds was seldom seen to greater advantage than in that exhibition of 1784, and his work then displayed was a complete proof that he had in no way suffered from his illness, though Walpole had stated the exact contrary in 1783, "Sir Joshua seems to decline since his illness." Reynolds had then sent ten portraits, which were certainly not among his masterpieces, but which had probably been painted before the illness occurred. With the Tragic Muse, in 1784, came the delightful portrait of Mrs. Siddons's sister, Miss Kemble; the tender presentations of the beauty of maternity and childhood of the Lady Honywood and Lady Dashwood; the arch-mischief of Mrs. Abington as Roxalana; the virile portraits of Warton and Charles Fox.

There is an interesting letter from the statesman to the painter regarding the last-named picture. Fox had been sitting during the early days of his coalition Government with Lord North, and had requested Reynolds to introduce the title of the India Bill upon the scroll in his hand, a measure which that Government fondly regarded as its crowning achievement. Before the picture was delivered, however, the King had sent that abominably unconstitutional memorandum in his own handwriting round the benches of the House of Lords, which declared that any peer voting for the Bill was His Majesty's enemy. The Bill had been rejected and the Government

dismissed. Reynolds, in these circumstances, had omitted the title of the Bill from the scroll. In April, just before the exhibition, Fox wrote to him from St. James's Street—

"DEAR SIR,

"If it is not too late to have one of the papers upon the table in my picture docketed 'A Bill for the better regulating the Affairs of the E. I. Company, etc.,' I should be very much obliged to you if you would get it done immediately. If my object in this were only a little vanity, I should not be so anxious about it; but as I have told many persons that it would be so, and as I intend it shall be so whenever the picture goes home, the omission of the docket at the Exhibition at this particular time might be misconstrued into a desire of avoiding the public discussion upon a measure which will always be the pride of my life. This is the point upon which I am most anxious, but if another paper could be docketed 'Representations of the Commons to the King, March 15, 1784,' it would be so much the better. I beg your pardon for troubling you upon these things, which may appear trifles, but which are not so from the misconstructions that may be made.

"I am, very truly, dear sir,

"Yours ever,

"C. J. FOX."

This fine portrait, which is in the possession of the Earl of Leicester, and the many replicas of it, all bear the two titles.

In 1785, Reynolds exhibited no less than sixteen canvases, including the "Snake in the Grass," a Venus, the "Children of the Duke of Rutland," which was burned at Belvoir, and a portrait of George, Prince of Wales, none of which, however, call for special notice.

The exhibition of 1786 would have been alone memorable as containing the magnificent portrait of Hunter, the great anatomist, a portrait which will rank with Reynolds's finest presentations of male character. The great physician sits with the head raised, evidently in deep thought, and with a pen held loosely in the hand. There is a tradition that Reynolds had great difficulty in securing a suitable pose, and Hunter, getting fatigued, fell into a reverie, and assumed the natural attitude of that mood, upon which the painter at once sketched in the design of this famous portrait. That of Sharpe the lawyer, exhibited in the same year, is almost as fine, and the half-lengths of Lee and Erskine have certainly never been surpassed by any one but Reynolds himself. Add to these the stately whole-length of Philippe Egalité, who himself sat under the painting at the Academy dinner; the delightful Lady Spencer in the straw hat; the equally delightful Miss Anne Bingham, Lady Spencer's sister, also in the straw hat; the Duchess of Devonshire playing with her infant daughter, and the "Child with Guardian Angels," and we get conclusive evidence both of Reynolds's energy and of the preservation of his artistic powers at their highest in his sixty-third year.

The portrait of the Duke of Orleans was, no doubt, painted for the Prince of Wales, as it was burnt later at Carlton House. It is now only known by the print by J. R. Smith, and by small copies which were made by Briggs and Drummond. Leslie, however, remember seeing the original at the British Gallery in 1813, when a memorial collection of Reynolds's works were exhibited. "He gave," says Leslie, "to the Duke of Orleans the bearing and look of a prince, but the traits of the debauchee were not in the least softened." The duke evidently had a natural dignity of manner. Reynolds

himself remarked how few people appear with grace and ease when the arms are unemployed, and said he never saw a man stand wholly unoccupied as well as the Duke of Orleans.

In 1787 the exhibition contained fifteen portraits by the President, including the Lady Smyth and her Children, the delightful Cherub Heads in the National Gallery, the full length of the Prince of Wales in the Robes and Order of the Garter, and the portrait of James Boswell. We see the origin of this last in a letter from Boswell to the painter in 1785.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The debts which I contracted in my father's lifetime will not be cleared off by me for some years. I therefore think it unconscientious to indulge myself in any expensive article of elegant luxury. But in the mean time you may die, or I may die, and I should regret very much that there should not be at Auchinleck my portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I have the felicity of living in social intimacy.

"I have a proposal to make to you. I am certain to be called to the English Bar next February. Will you now do my picture, and the price shall be paid out of the first fees which I receive as a barrister in Westminster Hall? Or, if that fund should fail, it shall be paid, at any rate, five years hence by myself or my representatives.

"If you are pleased to approve this proposal, your signifying your concurrence underneath upon two duplicates, one of which shall be kept by each of us, will be a sufficient voucher of the obligation.

"I ever am, with very sincere regards,

"My dear sir,

"Your faithful and affectionate humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL.

"London, June 7, 1785."

The security does not seem very tempting, but the good-natured painter acquiesced in the arrangement, and the portrait was duly painted. Reynolds, indeed, had a great affection for Boswell, and took great pleasure in his company, which at this time, and later he was at great pains to cultivate. The pair first made each other's acquaintance through Goldsmith, an acquaintance of which Boswell was wont to speak as "a jewel of the finest water." To Reynolds the good-natured busybody was ever "the harbinger of festivity," and to him, as to another contemporary, William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell, who much admired him, "the realization of a good-natured, sociable, jolly fellow, whose eyes glistened with sociability when he saw the human face divine." No doubt Boswell's company in some measure filled the gap in Reynolds's life which had been left by the death of Goldsmith. Reynolds would find time to visit James when he was in bed with gout; Boswell would drag off the painter to any of those entertainments of the town which so often excited his inquisitive mind; thus they once appeared together at an execution. The following letter explains how Reynolds would at times return the compliment:—

"Wednesday.

"DEAR SIR,

"This being St. Luke's Day, the Company of Painters dine in their hall in the city, to which I am invited, and desired to bring a friend with me. As you love to see life in all its modes, if you have a mind to go, I will call upon you about two o'clock; the blackguards dine half an hour later.

"J. REYNOLDS."

Death was again busy with Reynolds's friends, and we may be sure that a very solemn epoch in his life was

THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE

marked by the gradual failing and death, in 1784, of his great friend Johnson. The letters of contemporaries are full of touching details of those last sad days—the paralytic stroke in 1783, which deprived him of speech, the shock of which he recorded himself in those pathetic lines in his diary. "I was alarmed, and prayed God that, however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding." That prayer at least was granted. Hannah More records that "his sickness seems to have softened his mind without having at all weakened it. I was struck by the mild radiance of this setting sun."

Johnson rallied from that first seizure, but the incidents of the few months which were yet remaining to him are almost more painful to read of than the actual details of his malady. His strong mind, oppressed with the sense of his approaching end, at length surrendered to the dread of the "Fury with the abhorred shears," and to the thought which, as he confessed, filled him with terror, of the annihilation which he feared might follow the snapping of the thread of his life. From those forebodings he now sought to escape by expedients which seem full of an infinite pathos. There were attempts to revive the old clubs and societies of his earlier years, ending in mournful gatherings of the few survivors of those companies which had cheered him in his prime and in the pride of his intellect. He tried to revive the Ivy Lane Club, and could gather only Hawkins, Payne, and Ryland to join him in that sad enterprise. They found their old landlord, Horsman, gone, and the old house shut up, and gathered together in what must have been a sorrowful meeting at the Queen's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard. He even tried to found a new society at a house kept by Sam, an old servant of Thrale, in Essex Street, and asked Reynolds to join. Barry was proposed of the originals, which prevented Reynolds from thinking more of the matter.

Johnson's friends record the touching reluctance of the poor old man to leave their company, the sighs with which he left them after a vain attempt to prolong their meetings, the horror with which he sought those lonely lodgings, now empty of his poor pensioners, Mrs. Williams and Levet. Levet had died in 1783, and the verses Johnson wrote to his memory are in one way as touching as any in the language. Reynolds's niece, Mary Palmer, wrote to her cousin about them at the time.

"He" (Dr. Johnson), said she, "dines with us now and then, and is tolerably cheerful, yet it is easy to see that his constitution is breaking up. If I have time, I will copy out some verses he gave me which he wrote on the death of Mr. Levet, a poor apothecary who lived in his house with him, and for whom Dr. Johnson had the highest regard, and so high an opinion of his skill that he never took any prescription without first consulting Levet.

"The verses are, in my opinion, the finest that can be, and I believe they made more impression on me, as I heard him repeat them himself, with the tears falling over his cheek at the time."

We most of us know these lines, beginning—

> "Well tried by many a changeful year,
> See Levet to the grave descend;"

but some of them will surely bear repetition—

> "His virtues marked their narrow round,
> Nor made a pause, nor left a void,
> And, sure, the Eternal Master found
> His single talent well employed."

Reynolds and his kindly sympathy were not wanting with Johnson in those last sad months. The poor Doctor himself made a last effort at cheerfulness when, in 1784, he ordered a new suit of clothes for the Academy banquet,

in order, as he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, to publish his return to the world most effectually. His friends noticed some spark of his old self when, in a dinner at Richmond, a forgotten work of Defoe was mentioned, and Lord Eliot promised him the sight of a copy. At this dinner, or another, he expressed his fears of the approaching winter. Reynolds and Boswell, both present, had already been in kindly consultation about sending him to Italy. Boswell had seen the Chancellor Thurlow, and that potentate, to whom it will surely be remembered for righteousness, had declared that "it would be a reflection on us all if such a man should perish for want of means to take care of his health." Reynolds asked Johnson and Boswell to his house, "to have it out," as he said, "about the Italian tour."

That pathetic meeting at Leicester Fields is well known. Johnson was much affected by the solicitous care of his friends. "This is taking prodigious pains about a man," said he. "Oh, sir," replied poor Boswell in tears, "your friends would do anything for you."

The dying philosopher, indeed, was fast slipping beyond the reach of pensions from Government or the touching offices of his friends. Blows continued to fall upon him; he was more shaken than he need have been by the engagement of his old friend, Mrs. Thrale, to Piozzi, and was betrayed by his deep feelings into an undeserved stricture of that lady. A visit to his native county did him no good; it was there that he heard from Reynolds of the death of his old friend Ramsay.

"Poor Ramsay!" he wrote in reply. "On which side soever I turn, mortality presents its formidable frown. I left three old friends at Lichfield, and now find them all dead. I no sooner lost sight of dear Allan than I am told I shall see him no more. That we must all die we all know; I wish I had sooner remembered it. Do not

think me intrusive or importunate if I now call, dear sir, on you to remember it."

Reynolds succeeded Ramsay as Court painter, and one of the last letters Johnson wrote to him has reference apparently to this appointment, and to some circumstances which preceded it. It would seem that the place had not been offered to Reynolds, but that, feeling that his position as President of the Academy made it impossible for him to see another painter distinguished by the favour of the King, he had contemplated resigning his office. He had, however, swallowed his resentment, and allowed himself to be persuaded to apply for the post.

"I am glad," wrote Johnson, "that a little favour from the Court has intercepted your furious purposes. I could not in any case have approved such public violence of resentment, and should have considered any who encouraged it more as seeking sport for themselves than honour for you. . . . Write, do write to me, now and then. We are now old acquaintance, and perhaps few people have lived so much and so long together with less cause of complaint on either side."

This letter was written in September, and within three months that old acquaintance was at last closed. Reynolds's pocket-book has the entry: "December 13th. Dr. Johnson dyed at 7 in the afternoon." Reynolds had been a constant attendant at the bedside, where Johnson had made three dying requests of him. These were, never to use his pencil on a Sunday; to read the Bible whenever possible, and always on Sundays; and to forgive him thirty pounds he had borrowed of him, in order that he might leave that sum to a poor family. Hannah More says that the painter hesitated a little at the first request, but gave the promise in order, as she suggests, to comfort his dying friend. His pocket-books show that it was not

strictly observed. He acted as one of Johnson's executors, a trust which he carefully fulfilled, and there are notes of many engagements with his fellow-executors, Scott and Hawkins, the latter of whom, it was said, tried at one of their meetings to appropriate the Doctor's silver teapot as a memento of his friend. Reynolds, of course, attended at Westminster on the 29th of the month, when Johnson was laid in the Abbey.

Reynolds's career as a whole was so full of kindly relations with his contemporaries, and so free from strife and contention, that the few occasions in which he appears even passively as a party to a quarrel are thrown into what may be a fictitious prominence. An impartial consideration of the facts seems to suggest that professional jealousy alone inspired the few attacks upon Reynolds of which there is any record; that motive certainly appeared very plainly in the disgraceful aspersions with which James Barry attempted to blacken the character of Sir Joshua in 1783.

Barry was already a disappointed man. He had returned from Rome with very definite ideas of what was worthy the attention of the artist, and had deliberately closed his mind to any influences which might affect his conception of true art. "Rubens," he recorded, after visiting Turin on his way home to England in 1771, "Rembrandt, Vandyke, Teniers, and Schalken are without the pale of my church, and though I must not condemn them, yet I must hold no intercourse with them." He had determined to follow his own ideals at whatever cost, and with a full knowledge of the risks he ran. "I reflect with horror," he wrote at the same time, "upon such a fellow as I, and with such a kind of art in London, with house-rent to pay, duns to follow me, and employers to look for. God help you, Barry! Behold the handwriting on the wall against you. In the country to which you are going,

pictures of lemon-peel, oysters, and tricks of colour are in as much request as they are here."

It is to Barry's credit that he faced this danger and bravely followed his artistic conscience throughout. What concerns us here is that with these highly honourable aspirations he combined a malignant envy of his contemporaries, and of Reynolds in particular, which he expressed in such an offensive manner as to deprive him of much of the sympathy which his faithfulness to his ideals would otherwise have excited.

Barry's exact grievance is hard to discover, but it arose, there is little doubt, from a jealousy of Reynolds's success, and the contrast he was continually drawing between his own poverty and ill-success and the affluence and position of his rival. To his own morbid imagination, Barry was the poor, conscientious artist, pursuing his ideals upon a crust and oatmeal; Reynolds, the prosperous President of the Academy, rolling in his chariot, and bursting with the affluence which came, as he contended, from the debasement of art into the mere process of manufacture. As early as 1774, Barry, disappointed by the failure of his own art to captivate the public, was beginning to turn on his fellow-artists and rend them. He then published "An Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England," in which Reynolds, though not mentioned by name, was very plainly attacked.

The pamphlet appeared upon the failure of a proposal to decorate the room of the Society of Arts in the Adelphi, a scheme which had been considered by the artists who had failed to persuade Bishop Terrick to allow them to decorate the interior of St. Paul's. Barry himself had been hot for the proposal. He, no doubt, looked to the mural decoration of the room as a favourable opportunity for him to display his own views on

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art, and he was exceedingly chagrined when the scheme failed to commend itself to the Academy.

The "Inquiry" was little more than a personal attack upon Sir Joshua, who had incurred a double measure of Barry's wrath by opposing the Adelphi scheme. There were bitter allusions to portrait painters who professed ability to paint history; who lacked academic training and could paint faces only; who preached the grand style and eulogized Michael Angelo, but were "above attending to an exactness in the minutiæ and details of his figures." Barry went on to hint very clearly at his opinion of the President's rank as an artist, and of some mysterious influence which he supposed him to exercise to the detriment of his fellow-painters.

But the most offensive allusion to the President was contained in the following:—

"As to many who can have no part in the question of superior art, they ought, in conscience, to content themselves with those greater profits which in this commercial country must ever follow from the practice of the lower branches. . . . It is therefore to be hoped that they will no longer find it practicable to play the part of dog in the manger, as they have hitherto done, for, indeed, a great many of the blocks and impediments that were thrown in the way of superior art have been greatly owing to the secret workings and machinations of these interested men."

Reynolds naturally took no notice of these innuendoes which he could afford to ignore, but they were generally recognized as an ill-conditioned attack upon a man who had never shown anything to Barry but kindness and consideration. Barry sent the pamphlet to Burke, who blandly took exception to these sarcastic passages, which, however, he supposed to relate to professional quarrels, which, "while interesting to the parties

themselves, were not likely to amuse the public." But Burke himself was to feel the painter's childish petulance. Barry already owed everything to his kind-hearted friend, and when Burke, never weary in his good offices, exerted himself to send sitters to Barry's studio, the painter chose those very kindnesses as the occasion for the assumption of ridiculous airs, and for ungrateful rudenesses to his benefactor. Burke's friend Brocklesby wished for a portrait of the statesman, and Burke secured the commission for Barry. He called again and again for a sitting, but was ever put off with the plea that the painter had more important work on hand. Other painters, Barry wrote, had notice beforehand of engagements with their sitters; why was he to be treated more cavalierly than Sir Joshua Reynolds? Burke was nettled at this currish temper in the man he had befriended, and let the painter know it. But he good-humouredly gave way, and in a rather sarcastic letter he promised to consult Barry's dignity and convenience in the matter so far as his many engagements would allow.

Meanwhile Barry as an Academician brought certain self-denying ordinances before the Council. Among these were propositions that all portraits exceeding half-lengths should be hung above the line; that the whole body of Academicians should have a voice in the choice of pictures for exhibition; and that Academicians should draw lots for the right to exhibit a limited number of canvases. These proposals the Council rejected by five-votes to two, Reynolds, who was present, not voting.

The rejection of his proposals widened the breach between Barry and the Academy. He said freely that the Council was permeated by the influences of clique and favouritism, which were working fatal mischief to art and to artists, and he turned in disgust from the institution to take up single-handed the decoration of

the great room at the Adelphi, which the Academicians as a body had refused to undertake. This was an exceedingly brave proceeding, for which Barry is entitled to all praise. He sent his proposal to the Society of Arts, through Valentine Green the engraver, on March 5, 1777, a proposal in which he stipulated only that the Society should provide canvas, colours, and models. The offer was accepted, and Barry began work in the July following. He had just sixteen shillings in his pocket when he started, and he lived during the seven years during which he laboured on his paintings chiefly on oatmeal porridge. Even that he procured by work in the evening for printsellers, or by small loans, which he hoped to repay by the profits of the exhibition of the work when completed.

Barry brought his work near completion in the spring of 1783, when, as he said in the pamphlet describing it, he "wished, in a work of such extent, to adopt the old Greek practice, and, while it was yet in a state of being improved and amended, to avail myself of the opinion of the candid and well-informed part of the public before it received the last hand." He chose the day of the Academy exhibition for the opening of his own, and the publication of the pamphlet as the opportunity for a renewed attack upon Reynolds of a disgraceful character. "A book is published to recommend it (his work)," wrote Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, "which, if you read it, you will find decorated with some satirical strictures on Sir Joshua Reynolds and others. I have not escaped."

Barry had evidently worked himself into the belief that he was a genius starving upon the greatness of his ideas, and the victim of a conspiracy of portrait painters, with Reynolds at their head, whose machinations kept him poor and neglected in some mysterious way which he did not explain. He began his work, he said, "with

a clear foresight of the many vexatious delays and difficulties that would naturally happen, as well as of the underhand malevolent attentions from a certain quarter, which had continually followed me, and which I well knew would not be wanting industriously to embroil and embitter matters on this occasion."

Of portrait painting he proceeded to express the meanest opinions.

"By the trade of portraits the public taste for the arts has been much depraved . . . ; it is the means amongst us by which is obtained a fashion, a fortune, and, upon true commercial ideas, a rank and consequence, as the business and resort of the shop, and the annual profits of it are the only estimates which generally come under consideration . . . ; it stands to true high art as occasional versifiers to Homer and Milton, or dentists and corn-cutters to Hippocrates and Harvey. In such work the natural passion for glory is meanly sacrificed to thirst of lucre and vanity. The man becomes actuated by envy and all the baser passions. His only resource is in the artifices devised by his cunning to crush his rivals."

That there should be no mistake about the person alluded to in this bitter invective, Barry went on to attack the well-known excursions of the President into sacred and historical art. From his own jaundiced point of view he was right to be more explicit, for no one would recognize the kindly Reynolds in the picture of the malicious portrait painter, painted by his disordered imagination.

"If Carlo Vanloo, Carlo Maratti, Cignani, etc., had done nothing more original than the painting of Nativities, with the light coming from the child, the affection of the Mother, the simplicity of the shepherds, the angels, Joseph, the stable, the ox, the lamb, etc., we should have given the praise to Antonio Correggio, to whom all this

belongs, without much regard to the paltry alterations or additions of his barren imitators." Lest there should be any mistake as to whom he pointed at, Barry took care to add compliments to other portrait painters which excluded those from his invective. Thus he speaks of "that ingenious Proteus Gainsborough, who is so becoming and so excellent in every shape he assumes; the ever-to-be-admired Zoffany, and the masterly Wright of Derby."

Here, again, Reynolds could afford to smile, but the paper contained a disgraceful charge, which, as we learn from Northcote, had been whispered by other enemies of the President. Barry accused portrait painters of "what is not merely mercenary and sordid, but also vicious . . . everything that is mean in art and meaner in morals may then naturally be expected; their houses, shame upon them, will become convenient, and for other purposes to which those of painting portraits serve but as a blind."

Such was the charge that Barry thought fit to put in type against Reynolds, whose household had been conducted all along either by his own sister or by two young girls like his nieces Offy and Mary Palmer. No wonder that he confessed to Northcote that "he was afraid he hated Barry."

It has been counted for righteousness to Barry that, before it was too late, he saw the error of his ways, and was vigorous in his support of the President against the Council in some differences which arose later; that he also delivered a prodigious eulogy of the man he thus maligned, after he was dead. To some of us this seems to increase his damnation. Reynolds might well forgive the frantic accusations we have quoted, but he could surely never have pardoned any praise which came from the same source.

Before those repentant days, however, there were

other occasions for the Irish painter to display his spleen and his ill-breeding. Barry, in 1782, had been appointed Professor of Painting to the Academy. Having delayed the delivery of his first lecture for nearly two years, he was reminded of his duties by several of the Academicians, the President among them. When the latter mentioned the matter, Barry put himself into a fighting attitude, shook his fist at the President's nose, and remarked "that if he could be satisfied to read to the students such stuff as Reynolds's Discourses, time and labour would indeed be superfluous, but that his lectures would be of another order altogether." When at last these came to be delivered, Barry made them mere vehicles for invective against the principal Academicians and against Reynolds in particular, who was reduced to so awkward a situation in his chair as an auditor that "he was obliged at last either to appear to be asleep, or to absent himself from the place."

The private life of Reynolds continued much as ever. He must have felt deeply the severance of connections, such as came with the death of Garrick and Johnson, but his equable temper, and, above all, his devotion to his art, stood him in good stead. It was that continuous labour which saved him perhaps from the self-questioning torments to which Johnson was subject, and gave Sir Joshua a continuing zest for the relaxation of the social evenings which he certainly enjoyed throughout his life. It was one of his maxims that "no man relishes an evening walk like him who has been employed the whole preceding day." With Reynolds the evening walk was represented by those engagements with a large circle of friends in which so much of his leisure was spent. To the keen enjoyment which he found in those social meetings, the steady labour of his days doubtless contributed. Reynolds was eminently a night bird; he once said that he was so

eldom in the streets by daylight that he could not avoid he feeling that every one he passed was staring at him.

The meetings of the Club continued with great regularity, though they must have sadly missed the Doctor. Burke, however, was a host in himself. Reynolds used to declare that he often heard Burke say in the course of an evening ten good things, each of which would have served a noted wit to live upon for a twelvemonth. The society in 1783 had left its old quarters at the Turk's Head in consequence of the death of the landlord, and although it still showed its independence by blackballing peers and bishops, the Club had increased its numbers from nine to thirty-five. Besides his old friends Burke, Fox, Gibbon, Charlemont, and the rest, Reynolds now met Lord Althorp, Lord Upper Ossory, Joseph Banks, Adam Smith, Windham, and Scott, and though he no doubt regretted the old memories which centred chiefly in Johnson and Goldsmith, there were certainly possibilities of entertainment in such company.

Reynolds by this time also had joined the leading spirits of the Whig party at Brooks's. As early as 1773 Topham Beauclerc wrote to Charlemont, "Would you imagine that Sir Joshua Reynolds is extremely anxious to become a member of Almack's. You see what a noble ambition will make a man attempt." Brooks's Club, or Almack's, as it was first called after its original Master of the House, was an exceedingly aristocratic institution, to which entry at this time was quite as difficult as to White's. Almack's, indeed, was founded in 1764 by the secession of a number of young bloods from that notable institution, with the object of providing a place in which to continue the high play which after the accession of George the Third was frowned upon by the Court. Brooks's in 1785 was absolutely identified with the fortunes of the Whig party, by reason of its having been

chosen as his favourite club by Mr. Charles Fox. Reynolds's noble ambition was fulfilled only in that year, when he was elected upon the proposal of the Duke of Portland. Thereafter we may think of him as often at Brooks's, where so many of his friends were wont to spend their evenings and their substance — Fox, Sheridan, Gibbon, Langton, the Keppels, Lord Spencer, the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Devonshire, and the cream of the Whig party, including the young Prince of Wales. Brooks's, in fact, as the headquarters of that party, was taboo at Court, and Reynolds's joining this society would have been in itself a sufficient reason for the King's aloofness.

The play, too, was a great resource for Reynolds in these years. He delighted apparently in all that concerned the stage. It was his custom to take as many as forty seats at all Mrs. Abington's benefits, which he would fill with the wits and notabilities of his acquaintance. His friendship with Sheridan took him to all the performances of that author's comedies, and he was particularly interested in the success of the *Trip to Scarborough*, where his favourite, Mrs. Abington, was the "Miss Hoyden," and Perdita Robinson the "Amanda." With Mrs. Siddons, as we know, he was already fast friends. He never missed a first night or a benefit of that great actress, and on those occasions was always to be seen sitting with Charles Fox among the musicians of the orchestra. Boaden so describes him on February 5, 1795, "rapt and breathless," when she came on for the first time as "Lady Macbeth." In 1786 we find him at the benefit of Mrs. Jordan, who played "Hypolita" in *She Would and She Would Not;* Mrs. Jordan, who captivated the British public as no comic actress had done before, and ran away with the heart of the King's sailor son, the Duke of Gloucester. Reynolds does not

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seem to have painted Mrs. Jordan, but he was on friendly terms with most of the ladies who filled such important places in the royal *ménages* of those days. There are many appointments with Perdita Robinson, for instance, both professional and private, and he left two bewitching portraits of that lady, one of which may be seen to-day at the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square. In 1786 he painted a portrait of Mrs. Fitzherbert, the other lady friend of that graceless Prince of Wales. The marriage of that interesting couple was a year or two later to be the occasion of a great to-do in Parliament, where the Whigs were hopelessly deceived by the Prince, who put Charles Fox up to deny that any ceremony had taken place—a scandalous trick which compromised Fox and his political friends for years.

Besides the regular diversions of the play-houses, Sir Joshua sometimes assisted at the private theatricals which were just now in great vogue amongst highly placed people. Lady Upper Ossory had a theatre at Ampthill, the Duchess of Marlborough one at Blenheim, and the Duke of Richmond one in Whitehall. There was an extremely fashionable company assembled at the duke's mansion in 1786 and 1787, when a host of distinguished amateurs played *The Way to Keep Him*. Lord Derby was the "Lovemore," Major Arabin, of the Guards, the "Sir Bashful Constant," and young Edgcumbe, Reynolds's friend, the "Sir William Fashion." The ladies who acted were Mrs. Hobart, Mrs. Damer, Miss Campbell, and Mrs. Bruce. Reynolds, we find, was honoured with a ticket, and Miss Farren, who superintended the rehearsals, no doubt at the suggestion of Lord Derby, whom she afterwards married, "was allowed to dispose of one ticket."

The King and Queen honoured one of the performances with their presence, and the town was in raptures. Horry Walpole was of opinion that the Richmond

Theatre would "take root." "Who should act genteel comedy perfectly," wrote he, "but the people of fashion that have sense?" As for Lord Henry Fitzgerald in "Don Felix," Walpole was absolutely beside himself with praise. "He is a prodigy, a perfection, all passion, nature, and ease. You never saw so genuine a lover. Garrick was a monkey to him in 'Don Felix.' Then he is so much the man of fashion, and is so genteel. In short, when people of quality can act, they must act their own parts so much better than others can mimic them." The magazine writers who were admitted as reporters to these performances were not at all so enthusiastic in their praise. But perhaps, as Horace suggests, they sent actors, who wrote criticisms of the amateurs "in envy."

It was with such amusements as these, then, that the fortunate Reynolds, at the age of sixty and more, when such pleasures often begin to pall, was able to lighten the daily labours of his painting-room. His company, too, was sought on all sides, and his known taste consulted by a host of friends who relied on his judgment. We may be sure that the painter was much interested in such questions as that put to him in 1786 by the Duke of Portland, when he advised that nobleman, whom he was visiting at Balstrode, to buy the famous vase now in the British Museum for a thousand pounds. He was constantly deciding on the merits of an old master for this noble friend or another, or pointing out where such and such a canvas could be cleaned and restored with the least chance of injury. He himself offered to repaint a Titian for Lord Upper Ossory, the same picture he wished to have in exchange for the "Girl and Pigs" of Gainsborough, "which," he wrote, "I have the vanity to think no one can do but myself."

The villa at Richmond was another resource for Reynolds during these later years, and formed the object

nd excuse for many pleasant excursions on Sundays uring succeeding summers. The house stood near the op of the hill, and commanded a view of the famous rospect. Reynolds is said never to have slept in it until e went there for a change during his last illness, and his isits were invariably for the day only, and in company f large parties of his friends whom he took down to ine. There are numerous records of those social meetngs in the diaries and letters of the period; Boswell, Iannah More, and Fanny Burney are all eloquent about nem. Fanny takes us to Richmond in much good comany in 1782; Lord Cork, her own father, the Bishop of t. Asaphs, Gibbon, and Burke. Fanny is rapturous bout Edmund, who seems to have done most of the alking. "He is tall, his figure is noble, his air comnanding, his address graceful, his voice clear, penetrating, onorous, and powerful, his language copious, various, and loquent, his manners are attractive, his conversation is elightful."

Burke, having obliged the company with dissertations n a variety of subjects, settled at last upon the character f Cardinal Ximenes, which he discussed at great length. 'As if fearing he had become too serious," continues 'anny, "he rose to help himself to some distant fruit, nd then, when standing in the noblest attitude and with smile full of radiant ideas, he vivaciously exclaimed, 'No imagination, not even the imagination of Miss Burney, could describe a character so extraordinary as that f Cardinal Ximenes; not even the pen of Miss Burney ould have described it adequately.'" Here was a adiant idea indeed, and Fanny, on her return, as we see, at down quickly and returned the compliment by estowing her choicest adjectives upon the incomparable Burke. One imagines an occasional smile on the face of ne level-headed Reynolds behind the big ear-trumpet

at the humours of that mutual admiration society which so often gathered at his table.

The possession of his villa at Richmond was the occasion of some of those frequent meetings with Horace Walpole, where Reynolds's criticism of Horace's treasures was not always welcome to that connoisseur. He was called in in 1785 to Strawberry Hill, to admire Horace's "Henry VII.," when he said dryly that "it was hard, and in the old Flemish manner." Horace wrote off in great indignation to Lady Ossory. "For hard," he writes, "it is so bold that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish, there is nothing Flemish in it, except a chiaroscuro as masterly as Rubens's. But it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long." Walpole never seems to have forgiven the painter for his lack of enthusiasm over the famous Holbein. He was constantly girding at him in his letters, thought he ought to be paid by annuities which should cease when his colours faded. In 1786 he much belittled a purchase of the "Seven Sacraments" of Poussin from Rome, made on Reynolds's advice by the Duke of Rutland; as also Reynolds's own acquisition of a miniature of Cromwell. Says Walpole, "Sir Joshua has himself bought a profile of Oliver Cromwell which he thinks the finest miniature of Cooper he ever saw. But all his own geese are swans, and the swans of others are geese." Such little weaknesses, however, are quite human, especially in collectors, and in the main Walpole appreciated Reynolds, and did full justice to his great powers as a portrait painter.

Reynolds was perfectly accessible by amateurs of art as well as of collecting. Sir George Beaumont, who painted pictures which were much considered in his day, one of which inspired those lines of Wordsworth—

"The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream,"

ut which have not appealed so forcibly to later critics, vas among his intimate friends. He was the frequent uest, too, of other amateurs, like Sir A. Hume and Sir Harry Englefield, besides Bunbury the caricaturist, whose vorks had a great vogue before the appearance of the nighty Gillray, and whom he knew intimately as the rother of his friend Sir Charles at Barton. The artistic adies, too, Lady Dina Beauclerc, who drew the pretty ancies so charmingly engraved by Bartolozzi, Mrs. Damer, Mrs. Walsingham, Mrs. Weddell, and Lady Buckinghamhire, were all included in his circle.

He had, however, a profound contempt for false connoisseurs, and although it must be confessed that he himself was among their number he did not care for the amateur dealer in old pictures. Cribb, his framemaker, used to relate with much glee a story of Reynolds and Mr. Desenfans, one of those gentry whom Leslie describes as "half-trading, half-dilettante patrons of art." That gentleman bored Reynolds continually by his glorification of Claude, and by his depreciation of modern landscape painting. Reynolds possessed a good example of the painter, set Marchi to copy it, and hung the copy for some time in the place where the original had hung in Leicester Fields. He then sent it to Cribb's shop to be relined. Desenfans, following his usual habit, called at Cribb's, saw this copy, and at once took it for a true example of the master. He sounded Cribb as to the possibility of inducing Reynolds to part with it, and entered into an anonymous correspondence, with Cribb as intermediary, which resulted in his purchase of the copy for two hundred guineas. Reynolds at once returned the cheque, with an expression of his wonder that a gentleman of Mr. Desenfan's profound knowledge in landscape art

should have been so deceived by a modern copy. He used himself to relate the story with much relish.

A similar story is told by Northcote of Reynolds and the Chevalier Vanloo. The Chevalier, when on a visit to England, boasted to the painter of his accurate knowledge and experience in the works of the old masters, saying he could never be deceived or imposed upon by a copy. Reynolds thereupon showed him the head of an old woman which he had himself copied from Rembrandt, and asked his opinion upon it. He was much amused when Vanloo pronounced it an undoubted original.

Reynolds, in 1783, according to Northcote, but in 1785, according to Tom Taylor, had made a second journey to the Low Countries, this time in the character of a collector. Joseph of Austria was now suppressing the conventual bodies of those countries and putting up many of their artistic treasures to public auction. The sale took place in Brussels, where Reynolds attended and laid out some thousand pounds in purchases. It was upon his return from this second visit that he made the interesting remark to Beaumont that, upon viewing the pictures of Rubens a second time, they appeared to have lost their brilliance. He rather curiously accounted for this by the fact that when he first saw them four years previously he was occupied in making notes from them all day, and he supposed that they acquired richness and depth from their contrast with the white paper of his notebook. He did not apparently notice the poorness of effect of his own work in comparison with the works of that great master which had struck him on his return from the first visit. Leslie thinks that there was less distance between himself and Rubens after 1781, and that his work displays a notable advance in power, due, no doubt, to the influence of the great painters he studied so carefully in that year. If this be so, it is a remarkable

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illustration of Reynolds's openness and alertness of mind, which would enable him to turn to good use impressions received at the age of near sixty. Those valuable qualities he undoubtedly preserved to the end of his days, and remained a scholar to the last.

At a time when the superb engravings from Reynolds's portraits are in such high favour with collectors, it is is not without interest to consider his relations with the men who produced them. Reynolds, it is certain, appreciated to the full the service which the best of these engravers were rendering to his art and his reputation. "Of all the various styles of engraving," says Northcote, "Sir Joshua Reynolds considered that of mezzotinto as the best calculated to express a painter-like feeling, particularly in portraits, and I have often heard him declare that the productions of Macardell would perpetuate his pictures when their colours should be faded and forgotten."

Many proofs from plates yet uncleaned were found in his portfolios, upon which he doubtless gave the engravers advice. There was, indeed, one with corrections of his own in Chinese white upon it exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1902. Woollett, too, consulted him about his plates, the "Jocund Peasants" and "Merry Cottagers." It is known also that he made some experiments in colouring mezzotints for his own works in transparent glazings; one of such prints was recently in the possession of Mr. E. Dexter, of Great Russell Street. Reynolds was thus on good terms with all the great engravers of his time, and was always ready to lend them his portraits as soon as painted for the purpose of being engraved, without charge of any kind.

This enlightened policy of Reynolds's had doubtless much to do with the vigorous growth of the British school of engraving during his own time, when indeed it attained a height which it had not reached before and has never

attained since. The engravers themselves had every motive for putting their best efforts into the work they were engaged upon, for the production of a fine plate from the popular designs of the President brought its reward, which was the craftsman's own without any necessity of sharing it with publishers and owners of copyright as in more recent and more commercial days. A fine engraving by a contemporary engraver soon rose in price even in the early days of the middle of the century. We find such a notable collector as Horace Walpole grumbling in 1770. "Another rage," he said, "is for prints of English portraits. I have been collecting them for thirty years, and originally never gave for a mezzotinto above one or two shillings. The lowest are now a crown; most from half a guinea to a guinea." One would like to see Horace at Christie's or Sotheby's to-day.

The masters of the art, from Macardell onwards, were employed upon Reynolds's portraits, and it would seem that it was his custom to give the pictures to such as first applied to him, unless a sitter recommended a particular engraver. His own pupil, Marchi, scraped seven plates; Macardell thirty-seven; J. R. Smith thirty-eight; J. Watson as many as fifty-eight. With all these men Reynolds seems to have been on the best of terms, and the only evidence of any controversy with an engraver is a letter written by the painter in 1783, in which is recorded a piece of impertinence on the part of Valentine Green, which the President most properly resented.

The trouble arose out of a proposed engraving of the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse. Upon the completion of that portrait Green wrote to the painter and asked his permission to make a plate from it. Reynolds replied that if the choice of the engraver depended upon him, Green's application, being the first, should certainly be remembered.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Siddons, in a note to Sir Joshua, expressed a wish that Howard should engrave the portrait. Howard, armed with such a recommendation, applied to Reynolds, and of course received his permission. Sir Joshua at the time informed Green that he could not have the picture, "as Mrs. Siddons had recommended another artist." The engraver replied in a long and indignant letter, in which he said he had investigated the whole matter, and that that investigation had convinced him that Mrs. Siddons had never written or even spoken to Reynolds on the subject. Reynolds thereupon sent the following letter to the engraver:—

"London, June 1, 1783.

"SIR,

"You have the pleasure, if it is any pleasure to you, of reducing me to the most mortifying situation. I must either treat your accusation with the contempt of silence—which you and your friends may think pleading guilty—or I must submit to vindicate myself like a criminal from a charge given in the most imperious manner, and this charge no less than that of being a liar. I mentioned in conversation the last time I had the honour of seeing you at my house, that Mrs. Siddons had wrote a note to me respecting the print. This note, as I expected to be believed, I never dreamt of showing, and I now blush at being forced to send it in my own vindication. This I am forced to do, as you are pleased to say in your letter that Mrs. Siddons never did write or even speak to me in favour of any artist.

"But supposing Mrs. Siddons out of the question, my words—on which you ground your demand of doing the print as a right, not as a favour—I do not see can be interpreted as such an absolute promise; they mean only in the common acceptation that you, being the person

who first applied, that circumstance should not be forgot, and that it should turn the scale in your favour, supposing an equality in other respects.

"You say you wait the result of my determination. What sort of determination can you expect after such a letter? You have been so good as to give me a piece of advice—for the future to give unequivocal answers. I shall immediately follow it, and do now in the most unequivocal manner inform you that you shall not do the print."

It is a matter of regret that Green's inexcusable conduct should have deprived him of further opportunity of executing any of those superb translations of Reynolds's portraits, which are now so highly prized. The group of the Ladies Waldegrave, the print of which, published in 1781, to-day realizes more money than Reynolds received for the painting itself, was the last canvas of his which Green engraved.

CHAPTER IX

LAST YEARS

1788–1792

NORTHCOTE relates how "old Mr. Wilton, the statuary," that is Joseph Wilton, R.A., whom Reynolds painted at Florence at the very outset of his career, once remarked to him, "Sir Joshua Reynolds was the only eminent painter that had been able to call back the public to himself after they had grown tired of him." Northcote comments upon this: "Yet it is certain that Sir Joshua was not much employed in portraits after Romney grew in fashion, although the difference between the painters was so immense."

Northcote wrote, no doubt, with the recollection of those earlier years of Reynolds's labours which he himself had witnessed, when a stream of sitters from morning to night found continuous occupation, not for the painter alone, but for the school of drapery-men and pupils with whom he was surrounded. He wrote also before the publication of the painter's pocket-books threw so complete an illumination upon his professional engagements. These notebooks quite dispose of Northcote's suggestion that Reynolds in any year of his professional life wanted sitters, though at intervals there came times when, for whatever reason, he relaxed from that early press of work which was neither good

for himself nor his art. His lists of engagements prove also that his last years were not the least busy of his career.

In the exhibition of 1788, for example, as a partial result of a series of sittings given by a long list of clients, a list which gives much corroboration to Wilton's dictum, Reynolds exhibited no less than eighteen pictures, fifteen of which were portraits. Among these was the magnificent Lord Heathfield, now in the National Gallery, a picture which is a triumphant proof that Reynolds retained his powers undiminished into the last years of his life. According to Leslie, that portrait has suffered much from repainting and retouching. He says, indeed, that great differences may be discovered between the canvas as it stands and its original state as represented by Earlom's fine mezzotinto engraving. But enough remains to make it a matter of congratulation that a work in which a great historical event is commemorated so finely is the property of the nation. We all know that imposing figure of the great Elliott, in which the very spirit of his three years' stubborn defence of Gibraltar is preserved. The cannon pointed downward suggests the locality of that famous struggle, and the key with the chain passed twice round the hand the determination with which the bluff Englishman stood out against the might of France and Spain to keep the fortress for his country. Reynolds was never more happy in seizing upon the essentials both of the character of his sitter and of the great incident of his life.

It was during Lord Heathfield's sittings for this portrait that he told Reynolds one of the few stories Northcote has preserved as passing from sitter to painter. There must have been many such related in that painting-room, and one regrets that those rescued by Northcote are so few. There was a rich Jew in Prussia,

Heathfield told Reynolds, who, on account of his wealth, was of great service to Frederick the Great, and was consequently in high favour with that monarch. The Jew, however, had some natural doubts about the security of worldly affairs during the turmoil on the continent of which Frederick was the centre, and was very anxious to get out of the country with his property. He approached the king for permission. "My dear Mordecai," Frederick wrote, in reply to his petition, "nothing but death shall part us."

Another notable picture in the 1788 exhibition, which, however, does not exhibit the painter at his best, was the "Infant Hercules," now at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. This was the result of a commission with which Reynolds was honoured by the Empress Catherine. It would be interesting to know how the fame of the painter reached that potentate; but we know that she kept a very watchful eye on English affairs. Mr. Fox was in high favour with her Majesty until he espoused the cause of the French Revolutionaries, and she may have heard of Reynolds as the statesman's friend. In any case, the commission was a most flattering one, the choice of subject as well as the price to be paid being left to the painter.

Reynolds used the occasion for one of those essays in the grand style which most of his admirers regret. He took for his subject a passage from Theocritus, where the infant Hercules grasps and throttles the snakes, by which he was attacked by the orders of Juno. The idea was a compliment to the Russian nation, whose growing power was typified by the vigorous child. He places the child in a massive cradle, furnished with wolf-skins for bedclothes. Iphicles crouches in fear at his side; Alcmena runs in with a crowd of attendants on one side of the composition; on the other, Amphitryon, with a naked

sword, and accompanied by servants with torches, stands aghast at the prowess of the child, who throttles the serpents in a very convincing fashion. The baffled Juno looks down from a cloud, and the blind Tiresias, painted from the "Blinking Sam" portrait of Johnson at Streatham, concludes the composition.

The attitude of the Hercules, Leslie tells us, was taken from an old German woodcut in his possession, which had belonged to Sir Joshua, and that figure appears to be the only satisfactory passage in the picture. It was, as Leslie points out, a subject quite beyond the powers of the painter, and most visitors to the imperial collection have little good to say for it. It is fair, however, to say that Dr. Waagen is not of these. He admires the strength of the Hercules, the dramatic life of the whole composition, and the depth, warmth, and golden-toned clearness of the colouring, which, he says, need not fear contrast with Rembrandt. Hodges, the landscape painter, described the picture as looking "as if it had been boiled in brandy." Reynolds undoubtedly took great pains with the picture. It was of this work he remarked that there were half a dozen other pictures, all better, underneath it. The picture was highly admired by the person most concerned, the Empress herself, who paid Reynolds fifteen hundred guineas for it, and added a gold snuff-box with her monogram in diamonds.

These later years of Reynolds were notable for his connection with Alderman Boydell and his patriotic scheme for the encouragement of the arts in England. In 1786 that enterprising printseller had issued a circular announcing his intention of commissioning British artists to paint a series of pictures from scenes in Shakespeare, to form a Shakespeare Gallery, which should disprove the contention of foreign critics that British artists were incapable of serious historical or poetical art.

LORD HEATHFIELD

ccording to Hayley, Romney's biographer, the idea origi-
ated in a conversation between Boydell and that painter,
hose imagination had been fired by the news of Cathe-
ne's commission to Reynolds. Romney was hot for the
cheme, and even named such modest terms as Boydell
ared not propose to Reynolds, Copley, and other
rtists.

According to Northcote, Reynolds at first hung back
om the proposal. Boydell thereupon sent George
teevens, the editor he was employing upon the Shake-
peare, to Reynolds. Northcote remarks, "George
teevens now undertook to persuade him to comply, and
aking a bank bill of five hundred pounds in his hand,
e had an interview with Sir Joshua; when, using all his
loquence in argument, he in the mean time slipped the
ank bill into his hand. He then soon found that his
node of reasoning was not to be resisted, and a picture
vas promised."

This account of Reynolds's connection with Boydell
eems a little malicious; but they undoubtedly came to
erms, by whatever means, and the results were soon seen
n canvases delivered to the alderman. One of the first
f these was the witches' scene in *Macbeth*, now at Pet-
vorth, which Northcote hugely admired, but which has
not moved any one else to much enthusiasm. There fol-
owed the "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," also at Petworth,
vith one powerful passage, the face of the dying man,
but on the whole a flimsy, unsuccessful piece of work.
Mason saw the painter at work on this canvas; he had a
coal-heaver of swarthy aspect stripped to the waist, with
a beard which the painter paid him extra for letting grow,
and with his face set in a grin, showing his teeth with a
very ferocious look. It is not surprising to find that this
method of evolving Beaufort's dying expression was not
particularly successful, and that the head of the cardinal,

as it appeared in the finished picture, was the result of the painter's imagination.

A third picture for this series was the "Puck," exhibited in 1789. Reynolds had found a poor child sitting on his steps in Leicester Fields, had taken him into the painting-room, and there made a study from the urchin. Boydell, during the progress of the "Cardinal Beaufort," was much struck with this study, and expressed a wish that the figure might be brought into the Shakespeare series. It was then suggested by a gentleman present that this might easily be done "if Sir Joshua will kindly place him upon a mushroom, give him a faun's ears, and make a Puck of him." The idea, we are told, pleased Reynolds; he called in the son of his frame-maker Cribb to give further sittings, and the "Puck"—certainly the most successful of the Shakespearian series—was the result.

Taken as a whole, Alderman Boydell's enterprise really proved what he set out to refute—that there was no great talent among the English painters of that day for the painting of historical or poetical subjects. The efforts of such men as Northcote, Wheatley, Peters, Rigaud, and Hamilton were no more successful than those of Reynolds; and the Shakespeare Gallery at this moment is not highly considered by collectors of prints from those and other painters. The scheme itself was nevertheless worthy of all praise, and it at least gave the engravers of that day much profitable employment, and produced some very excellent engraving. Some competent critics, indeed, hold that the engraving by Sharp from the Lear of West represents the high-water mark of line engraving in this country.

These efforts of the worthy alderman were much appreciated in his own day, which may have been some little compensation for the commercial failure of his

scheme—a failure brought about by the French Revolution, which put an end to the large sale of his prints on the Continent. His enterprise was gracefully acknowledged at one of the Royal Academy banquets—that of 1789. Farington tells us how Burke saw Boydell near him, and sent a note to the President containing these words—

"This end of the table, in which, as there are many admirers of the art, there are many friends of yours, wish to drink an English tradesman who patronizes the art better than the grande monarque of France, Alderman Boydell, the Commercial Mæcenas."

Reynolds sent the note to the Prince of Wales, who was present, and who very obligingly approved of it, and "the toast was drunk with unanimous approbation."

We arrive at last at the final exhibition of Reynolds's pictures, and at the last year of his life's work—that of 1789. He then sent twelve canvases to the Academy—portraits of Lord Rodney, Lord Lifford, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, Lord Vernon, Mrs. Watson, and Miss Gwatkin, Offy's young daughter. His subject pictures were a "Cupid and Psyche," the "Puck" already mentioned, the "Continence of Scipio," which went to St. Petersburg, and "Cymon and Iphigenia."

Most of these pictures display Reynolds at his best at the age of sixty-six. Walpole, who was no partial critic, was enthusiastic about some of them. Rodney—the haggard Rodney of his later years, distressed by debt resulting from faro at Brooks's, from the expenses of parliamentary elections, and from the actions by which he was harassed by merchants who claimed to have suffered in his conquest of the Dutch island of St. Eustatius—appears very plainly in this fine canvas, a pathetic contrast to the well-favoured young man presented in Reynolds's earlier picture painted in 1761.

Walpole pronounces the portrait "very like." Lord Lifford, too, he calls "very good;" and those who have seen the portrait of the Irish Chancellor, with its fine colour and its able arrangement of costume and accessories, will agree that it ranks among the painter's happiest male portraits.

Lord Henry Fitzgerald Walpole pronounced to be "Sir Joshua's second piece, and yields only to Mr. Sheridan's." Of this last, the magnificent three-quarter length of the orator, he says "praise cannot overstate the merits of this portrait. It is not canvas and colour; it is animated nature. All the unaffected manner and character of the admired original." Walpole's praise is not in the least overstrained, and it was a most happy chance that took that brilliant figure to Leicester Fields, that his prime might be perpetuated for posterity by Reynolds in the last year of his working life. We see there the Sheridan of the Impeachment of Warren Hastings, the orator to hear whom fashionable London paid fifty pounds for a seat; the self-confident Sheridan who declared that he felt wings sprouting from his shoulders. In no other portrait are the attractive features of the dramatist so well preserved—the straight nose dropping from the brow like a Greek statue, and the wonderful eyes which impressed all his contemporaries, the natural brilliance of which were enhanced by the strange natural faculty he possessed of never dropping the eyelid in a wink. Without this picture when we thought of Sheridan we should have remembered the bloated figure of later years and of the Gillray caricatures, the Sheridan whose manly comeliness was ruined by the claret and brandy of William Brooks.

Walpole was less pleased with the "Cymon and Iphigenia," which he describes as "glaring," but which reminds one of the finest of Reynolds's fancy subjects

It is now in the Royal Collection, having been presented to King George the Fourth by Lady Thomond. Mr. Seguier told Leslie an interesting story about this picture, which illustrates very happily the danger to which Reynolds's canvases were often exposed before his methods were understood by restorers. Soon after the picture came into the King's possession he sent for Seguier, and said, "Here is a very fine Sir Joshua; you must take it away and clean it for me." Seguier replied, "If your Majesty will allow me to say so, I would rather not. Sir Joshua's pictures are painted in such a manner that they will not bear cleaning without extreme risk." "You don't mean to say," replied the King, "that the picture is to be left in such a dirty state?" "There may be some dirt on it, sir; but I do not think that the effect of the picture suffers materially by it, and I should have the greatest fear that in attempting to remove it I should destroy some of the beautiful glazings." "Well," said the King, "you are a very obstinate fellow, but I suppose you must have your own way." Seguier appears to have varnished the picture, but, with that reservation, it remains among the uninjured works of the master.

Reynolds's notebook for February 13, 1788, contains the memorandum: "To be in the lobby of the House of Commons a quarter before ten—full dress." We may be sure that any appointment which drew Reynolds away from his easel at that hour in the morning was of more than ordinary interest, and that description certainly applies to the opening of the proceedings against Warren Hastings at Westminster Hall. It was to be present at that impressive ceremony, accordingly, that Reynolds on that February morning exchanged his mahlstick for his dress sword, and took his natural place among the most notable men of his day at the opening of that tremendous impeachment into which, by the astute management of

Mr. Pitt, the best energies of the Opposition were diverted for years.

There are several blank days in his list of sitters which, without affording positive evidence, make it probable that Reynolds was present at many of the most impressive moments of those proceedings. At the opening, as we know from Fanny Burney's account, he bowed to that lady from the Managers' box, where he stood beside Burke and Fox and Sheridan and Windham, with the last of whom Fanny was now conducting a mild flirtation. His connection with the actors in that great drama illustrates very happily the breadth of Reynolds's sympathies, and the calm toleration of his character which made him the common friend of the men most divided by the stormy passions of those days of wild political excitement. The central figure of this great function, Warren Hastings himself, he had painted as early as 1776, and the acquaintance, then begun, had been renewed on the Governor's successive returns to England. In 1783 Reynolds had been at Beaconsfield at the very time that Burke was planning the indictment which was to result in the impeachment, and on May 1 of that year he had attended Mrs. Hastings's evening party, where he must have met the Governor just come in from the House where he had read his rather tame reply to the preliminary charges. One could wish that Reynolds had left us a portrait of that lady, the Marian Imhoff whose good taste in dress and the way she wore her jewels, the romance of her marriage with the Governor, and the strange favour she received at the prim court of Queen Charlotte, made her so interesting a figure of the times. There is an old lady still alive near Hastings's native Daylesford who remembers "Madam Hastings," and repeats to this day the traditions of her acquisition by the Governor. That good old lady

MRS. SHERIDAN AS ST. CECILIA

maintains that she was bought for her weight in gold, and relates how she stood in a pair of scales while the Governor heaped up guineas in the opposing end of the balance until the beam kicked, leaving the lady with Hastings, and the gold with the complacent Imhoff.

We may think of Reynolds enjoying with his painter's eye all the tragic situations of that gorgeous trial which have been described in sentences as gorgeous by Macaulay. He listened as well as his deafness allowed him to those opening invectives of Burke, which stirred that great assembly with such emotion that even old Thurlow on the bench was moved to the expression of unwilling admiration, and the stout heart of Hastings himself for a moment seemed to quail. He must have seen the wild emotions of the ladies' gallery, where among the less impressive signals of handkerchief and smelling-bottle, sobs and screams were heard, and poor Mrs. Sheridan, already falling into that fatal decline, was carried out in a swoon.

We know for certain that in June of the same year he was there to listen to that wonderful effort of his friend Sheridan, when that extraordinary man brought into play all the resources, not only of his natural oratory, but of the arts he had acquired in his contact with the stage. We can imagine Reynolds's sense of humour being tickled by the impassioned appeals to the "God of Justice" by the man, much of whose time was spent in being hunted by duns from one coffee-house to another; his unemotional nature may have permitted a furtive pinch of snuff when the orator, as if exhausted by his effort, sank back into the arms of Burke to receive that excited gentleman's hugs and kisses.

It was to a cold caught by sitting under an open window at one of those meetings in Westminster Hall that Gainsborough attributed the illness which resulted in his death on August 2 of the same year, though if, as

is said, that illness took the form of a cancer in the neck, this seems improbable.

It is pleasant to think that at a time when the mind is often cleared of prejudice and sees things in their true proportion Gainsborough became anxious that whatever misunderstandings had existed between himself and Reynolds should be explained, and summoned his rival to his bedside. The exact details of that meeting will never be known, but Reynolds himself explained, with a reticence proper to such a subject, all that concerns any one but the actual actors in the scene—

"A few days before he died, he wrote me a letter to express his acknowledgments for the good opinion I entertained of his abilities, and the manner in which—he had been informed—I always spoke of him; and desired he might see me once more before he died. I am aware how flattering it is to myself to be thus connected with the dying testimony which this excellent painter bore to his art. But I cannot prevail on myself to suppress that I was not connected with him by any habits of familiarity; if any little jealousies had subsisted between us, they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity; and he turned towards me as one who was engrossed by the same pursuits, and who deserved his good opinion by being sensible of his excellence.

"Without entering into detail of what passed at this interview, the impression of it upon my mind was, that his regret at losing life was principally the regret of leaving his art; and more especially as he now began, he said, to see what his deficiencies were, which he said he flattered himself, in his last works, were in some measure supplied."

It would seem that the pathos of the old line, "The life so short, the craft so long to learn," so eloquent in its triteness and its applicability to all human effort, was

never better displayed than in these regrets of so consummate an artist as Gainsborough, reported so convincingly in Reynolds's simple words.

Northcote adds that Gainsborough's last words were, "We are all going to heaven, and Vandyke is of the company."

It seems unnecessary to go beyond Reynolds's own account of this last meeting, which explains perfectly the relations which existed between the two painters. It is surely an answer to those writers who have been led by an unfortunate error to magnify the trifling differences which had existed between them, and to lay any blame which such differences seemed to justify upon the shoulders of Reynolds alone.

Reynolds made the life and work of Gainsborough the subject of his Fourteenth Discourse, which he delivered to the Academy in December of the same year. It is certainly one of the most valuable of those addresses, and contains a candid and just appreciation of the work of the painter. Gainsborough drew his inspiration from the study of nature in the way which nature suggested to him. Like Reynolds himself, he was without the academic training which upon any temperaments but the strongest has such dangers to originality both of conception and execution; unlike Reynolds, he had devoted little time to the study of his predecessors in art. Reynolds, as was natural, guarded himself against the inference that Gainsborough's success made foreign travel and academic study superfluous for the ordinary student. Portraiture and landscape, to which his practice was confined, as he truly said, could best dispense with those aids to perfection.

As to that painter's technique, so entirely original and effective, he was quite appreciative; "the hatchings and odd scratches and marks making up an uncouth and shapeless appearance, which by a kind of magic, at a certain

distance, assumes form, all the parts seeming to drop into their proper places, so that we can hardly refuse acknowledging the full effect of diligence under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence."

There was great sense, too, in his remarks as to certain of Gainsborough's methods of study, such as his strange practice of building up "showbox landscapes, in which broken stones and coals, dried branches and paints, and bits of looking-glass, did duty for rocks, trees, and water. The value of such methods, like every other technical practice, seems to me wholly to depend on the general talent of him who uses them. They may be nothing more than contemptible and mischievous trifling, or they may be aids."

We have already seen that there were no signs in Reynolds's work that 1789 was to be the last year of his labour as an artist, nor is there any similar indication in the record of his social engagements. Reynolds continued to enjoy the full life we have seen him leading from the first. There are still notes of engagements during what we must consider as his last year of health which left few of his evenings unemployed. He was constantly at the houses of a still expanding circle of friends, or receiving those same friends at Leicester Fields. To those of his old friends who survived he was the most constant of entertainers either as host or guest. With Boswell he continued to revive the old associations of the Club in days when its meetings at last became spoiled by the dissensions in politics which raged among its members. "It gives me great pain," wrote Sir W. Jones to Sir Joseph Banks, "to know that party, as it is called, has found its way into the literary club, who meet reciprocally to impart and receive new ideas." It was the recovery of King George in 1789 which dissipated the hopes of the Whigs centred in the Regency of the Prince of Wales,

which brought discord into that ordinarily placid circle. Burke, getting on in years, without provision for his beloved son, now saw office and emolument snatched from his grasp. The Whig circle was rent by recriminations; Burke was jealous at the success of Sheridan, and at his ascendancy with Charles Fox; Sheridan repaid the feeling with interest. Fox himself was annoyed at the way in which Burke's vehement attacks upon the Court had compromised the party in the Regency matter, and a society which had formerly listened to discussion conducted in good humour by such a Tory as Johnson and such Whigs as Burke and Fox was now impossible as a neutral ground for the Whigs divided against themselves.

Reynolds, however, was still very constant in club appointments. He met Dr. Ashe and his friends at the recently founded Eumelian on Wednesdays, at Thomas's on alternate Tuesdays, at the Devonshire on Thursdays. He attended picture sales at Christie's; dined often with such old friends as Mrs. Montague, Wharton, Whitefoord, Langton, and Boswell. His membership of the Dilettante Society often brought men like Sir Joseph Banks and Lord Carmarthen to his house. A typical dinner-party at Leicester Fields would include Boswell, Lord Eliot, the beau Lumley Skeffington, a bishop like Dr. Kearney of Killaloe, three or perhaps four members of the Burke family, Courtenay, Sir William Scott, and Malone. On one night he would dine with Warren Hastings in Arlington Street; on the next he would join Edmund Burke in a modest meal at Slaughter's, the old haunt of artists in St. Martin's Lane. His friendship with Mrs. Montague and the Blues would take him often into the company of the brilliant Duchess of Devonshire and the other ladies who were using their arts and their beauty in the cause of the Prince and the Regency and the Whigs. On another evening he would meet the Duchess

of Gordon, whose beauty and great social position were just as much at the service of the Court party, and whose great influence helped to keep Mr. Pitt's country squires in order and in their places in the House of Commons during a whole generation. From such society as this he would return to his painting-room to receive Perdita Robinson, to show her the portrait he was painting of her graceless lover the Prince, or make one at a quiet dinner-party at her own house. Mrs. Jordan, too, would look in at the studio, to tell him, perhaps, of Mr. Romney's fine portrait of her as the Country Girl; or the tuneful Mrs. Billington from Vauxhall Gardens, whom he painted as St. Cecilia in the midst of a crowd of angels in a beautiful picture now in the Lenox Gallery in New York.

It was in the midst of the labours and the relaxations we have attempted to follow in this chapter that Reynolds, now in his sixty-sixth year, received warning that both his work and his pleasure were approaching their term. By one of those inscrutable dispensations which govern all human affairs, the warning arrived in a form which must have been the hardest of all to bear by a painter. Johnson had prayed that his intellect, upon which he prided himself, might be preserved to the last, and his prayer was granted. Reynolds was first to lose the sense by which the most exquisite work of his life had been accomplished, and by which light and form and colour, the sensations for which and by which he lived, were conveyed to his mind. In July of 1789 he had felt some uneasiness in his left eye, but it was little regarded at the time by himself or his friends, and his niece left town for Devonshire without any misgivings. On the 13th of the same month, however, while he was engaged upon the portrait of either a young lady named Russell, or on that of Lady Beauchamp, the sight of the eye became suddenly veiled. He at once laid down his pencils, but within

ten weeks of that day the use of that eye was entirely gone.

There is little doubt that the blow which thus fell upon Reynolds was the result of those early years of unremitting application to his work, when almost every hour of daylight found him at his easel. The malady from which he suffered, known as gutta serena, is described as the usual effect of overwork, and was the same which cost Milton his sight. Northcote tells us that, besides his painting by day, Reynolds was often occupied far into the night by literary composition. There are no signs of fluency in his style, and it is probable that the composition of his Discourses cost him infinite pains, and much work by candlelight. It is believed also that he often amused himself with literary work, and that he wrote much more than has ever appeared in print. It is known too that when Johnson wanted papers for the *Idler* at short notice, Reynolds sat up all night to finish them in the intervals of his hardest labours in the painting-room. Whatever the cause, however, his life's work was now at an end, and the portraits of Lord Hastings, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Macartney, Mr. Windham, Lady Beauchamp, Miss Cocks, and Miss Russell, finished painfully with the impaired sight still left to him, have a pathetic interest as the last of his work.

In this great trouble Reynolds's serenity of temper stood him in good stead. When the nature of his illness was declared, Mary Palmer hastened back to London from Torrington. In a letter written to her cousin in December she describes Sir Joshua as perfect in health, "and his spirits surprisingly so, considering what the loss of an eye is to him." That young lady herself acted as his amanuensis, as he was afraid to read, write, or paint. She found on her return that Ozias Humphry, who, like most young painters of that day was devoted to him,

had called, and noticing that Reynolds had listened with interest to his reading of the news sheet, had thereafter come each morning at Reynolds's breakfast hour to read the paper to him. Reynolds was naturally pleased with this attention, and brought two pictures daily from his collection into the room, as he explained, for their mutual consideration and benefit.

His days he seems to have employed with odd jobs about his painting-room which did not involve much strain upon his single eye. "He amuses himself," says Miss Palmer, "by sometimes mending or cleaning a picture, for his ruling passion continues in full force, and he enjoys his pictures as much as ever. He enjoys company, in a quiet way, and loves a game at cards as well as ever." There is some pathos in an anecdote related of him at this time—how he amused himself with a canary, which was so tame as to perch on his finger; how he talked to it as if it could understand; and how it at length flew out of the window, when poor Reynolds spent some vain hours in Leicester Square in the hope of reclaiming it.

It is a melancholy task to trace Reynolds in his efforts to escape from the oppressive thoughts which must have clouded his mind at this time in spite of all its natural serenity. With his niece as his companion he stayed for some time at his villa at Richmond, the house which he had previously used only for daily trips and had never slept in. There were visits to Burke at Beaconsfield with Malone and Windham and Courteney; to Brighthelmstone for sea air; and thence to Arundel, Chichester, Cowdray, and Petworth. He left notes in pencil of the objects which struck him on this tour—Chichester Cathedral, the Oliver miniatures and the Holbeins at Cowdray, Vandyke's Henrietta Maria, Lady Rich, Lady Cavendish, and Lord Goring. In October

EARL MOIRA

we find Boswell writing to Temple, "Sir Joshua's loss of the sight of one eye, and the weakness of the other, you may believe, must affect him deeply; he is another instance of *dici beatus ante obitum nemo.* His friends are assiduous in consoling him."

Boswell, Banks, Burke, with Reynolds and others of the Johnsonian circle, were at this time meeting often at each other's houses to consider a scheme for a monument to the Doctor in Westminster Abbey, a scheme which found some welcome occupation for the painter at this time. It was to take the form of a full-length statue, which Bacon was to execute at a cost of £600, and Sir Joshua and Sir W. Scott, as his executors, charged themselves with the duty of sending circular letters for contributions.

Distraction of one sort, moreover, was still in store for Reynolds, and though it was not of a pleasant nature, there is little doubt that the crisis which occurred in 1790 in his relations with the Academy had its value as an occupation for his enforced idleness. There have been many accounts of the dissensions which came to a head in that year—by Farington, who wrote his little Life of the painter, to prove, as he said, that he was not driven to resign the chair; by Reynolds, in a lengthy set of notes explaining his conduct and that of his opponents, given at full in Leslie's book; and by Leslie, who attempted to arrive at the merits of the dispute with all fairness.

This dispute arose out of the appointment of a successor to Mr. Wale, who, until his death in 1786, held the post of Professor of Perspective to the Academy. It is clear that before there was any question of rival candidates for the post, Reynolds had showed himself extremely anxious that it should not remain vacant. He considered, as he said, that it was necessary to "save

the Academy from the disgraceful appearance of there not being any member in it capable of filling this office, or that they were too indolent to undertake its duty." He accordingly lost no opportunity of urging the Council to fill up the appointment, and went so far as to solicit Sandby and Richards, both of whom he considered qualified, to become candidates, but without success. At the next Council the matter was again brought forward, and it was resolved, upon the proposal of Sir William Chambers, "to find some person, out of the Academy, properly qualified, and elect him an Academician, expressly for that purpose." Nothing, however, appears to have been done until 1788, when the death of Gainsborough left a vacancy in the ranks of the Academicians, and Russell being elected in his place, another vacancy occurred among the Associates. Fuseli the painter was then elected in opposition to Bonomi the architect, who had been recommended to Reynolds by Lord Aylesford, and whom the President had warmly supported as a suitable candidate for the Professorship of Perspective. At the same time Edwardes, an Associate, offered to teach perspective, though not, as it would appear, as full Professor. He was asked to submit a syllabus, which having been approved at a later meeting of the Council, it was agreed that he should give twenty lessons to the students at £1 10*s.* each.

In November of the following year, 1789, Reynolds again proposed Bonomi as a candidate for an Associateship then vacant by the elevation of Hamilton. Sawrey Gilpin also stood for election, and the votes being equal, Reynolds gave his casting vote for his own nominee, Bonomi, who was declared elected. Edwardes, then apparently anxious about the Professorship, wrote to the Council demanding permission to give one lecture on perspective to the Academicians and Associates, with a view to

being appointed to the post, and suggesting that he was willing to rest his success on the judgment of Sandby, Richards, Rooker, Bonomi, and Malton, junr., the last an outsider. This application was altogether irregular, and Edwardes was informed by an unanimous resolution of the Council that he, like other candidates for the vacant post, must submit a drawing to be considered by the Academy at the election, which was fixed for the 10th of February following. Reynolds himself wrote to Bonomi to submit his drawing for the same purpose.

It is quite clear that by this time there was a strong faction in the Academy which was prepared to support Edwardes, or any one else in opposition to Reynolds's nominee, Bonomi. "There was a party in the Academy," wrote Reynolds himself, "who had resolved that Mr. Edwardes should be the Professor, whether he did or did not produce a specimen, and they were resolved to unite in their votes in favour of any one of the candidates to prevent Bonomi from standing upon the same ground with Mr. Edwardes. For this end they fixed their eyes on Mr. Gilpin, an artist of acknowledged merit, and certainly deserving of their suffrages; but it may be suspected that it was not to his merit at present, but to a faction in which he most certainly had no concern, that he was indebted for an equal number of votes with Bonomi." It was the object of these gentlemen to exclude Bonomi from the Associateship, which, the resolution of the Council to seek a professor from outside the Academy notwithstanding, they felt would place him on equal terms with Edwardes. This move, as we have seen, was defeated by the casting vote of the President for Bonomi.

On the rejection of his proposal to show his qualifications by a lecture to the Academicians, Edwardes had turned sulky, and had refused to submit specimens of his work. He had written a letter to Reynolds, in which he

still offered himself as a candidate, but said "that specimens are required, he is past being a boy, and sha produce none." Reynolds, however, appeared to thin little of this, and expected to find Edwardes's drawing with those of Bonomi at the meeting on February 1 The election of Bonomi to the Associateship, howeve had exasperated the Edwardes party; "the friends c Mr. Edwardes were in the most violent rage," say Reynolds, "and accused themselves of want of precautio in not bringing together the whole party on that day (the day, that is, of Bonomi's election to the Associateship) "Their activity was now exerted to the utmost; thei own private business totally neglected for the publi service; by various pretences they boasted of havin secured a majority in favour of Mr. Edwardes to be a Academician at the next election."

At the head of the cabal opposed to Reynolds wa Sir William Chambers. From a remark made by Si Joshua to Northcote some years before, we may suppose that there was already some little friction between Chambers and the President. "It is true I am King at th Academy," said he, "but Sir William Chambers is Viceroy." In any case, three days before the forthcoming election, Chambers wrote to Reynolds that "he heartily joined in opinion with much the greater number of our members, who are convinced that no such election—as the Professor—can be necessary." He added, "As far as I am able to judge, there appear other names in the list of the Associates better qualified to serve the Academy in its highest station, and one of these shall certainly have my voice."

Chambers, who had originally proposed the election of a Professor, and, as Reynolds says, "joined in the opinion of the President that heaven and earth ought to be moved to fill the place," did not confine his opposition

o letters. At one meeting of the Council he objected to Bonomi as a foreigner, and asked the President "in a peevish tone why he should persevere in favour of this foreigner, as it will appear to the world as if no Englishman could be found capable of filling a Professor's chair." This inquiry was made in the presence of a foreigner who was a member of the Council, Mr. Rigaud, and was made by a man also who had quite recently voted for the election of another foreigner, Mr. Fuseli. The remark seems very strong evidence that the President was right when he spoke of the existence of cabal and intrigue directed against himself, quite apart from the merits of the question before the Council.

There seems ample confirmation of this in the accounts of the meeting of February 10. Reynolds himself has described the aspect of that meeting.

"Instead of the members, as usual, straggling about the room, they were already seated in perfect order, and with the most profound silence. I went directly to the chair, and looking round for the candidates' drawings, I at last spied those of Mr. Bonomi thrust in the darkest corner at the farthest end of the room. I then desired the secretary to place them on the side tables, where they could be seen. He at first appeared not to hear me. I repeated my request. He then rose, and in a sluggish manner walked to the other end of the room, passing the drawings, rang the bell, and then stood with his arms folded in the middle of the room. Observing this extraordinary conduct of the secretary, I rose from my seat and took one of the drawings in my hand, and a servant took the other, and placed them on the table, the secretary, who had not thought proper to join the party, not deigning to touch them. He said he had rung the bell for the servant. . . .

"The drawings were now placed where they could be

seen, though no Academician, except Mr. T. Sandby, deigned to rise from his seat to look at them. . . ."

This unobliging secretary, it may be remarked, was Mr. Richard, who had succeeded Mr. Swaine in that office a year or two before.

Reynolds proceeded to open the proceedings, and explained what all knew, that the business before the meeting was to elect an Academician in the place of Mr. Meyer. He exhorted his hearers to choose a candidate who was fitted for the office of Professor of Perspective, which had been vacant so long, to the great disgrace of the Academy; he presumed that Mr. Bonomi's rival, by not sending to the Academy a specimen of his abilities, had declined the contest; and he hoped, he confessed, rather than expected, that the votes for the honour of the Academy would be unanimous on this occasion. "The question before you, ay or no," he added, "is, 'Is the author of these drawings which are on the table qualified or not qualified for the office he solicits?'"

Such is Reynolds's own account of his address, and it must be confessed that it does not appear to have been couched in very conciliatory form. It was, however, a plain if curt statement of the object of the meeting, and certainly merited a better treatment than it received.

As soon as Reynolds resumed his seat, Tyler, an Academician whom Reynolds spoke of as one of the most vehement of his opponents, rose, and demanded, who ordered the drawings to be sent to the Academy? Reynolds replied that he did. Tyler repeated the question, "but in a still more peremptory tone." Sir Joshua again repeated that he had sent to Bonomi the decision of the Council. Tyler then replied, "I move that they be sent out of the room." Barry rose with

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great indignation. "Nobody can be found so lost to all shame as to dare to second so infamous a motion." The seconder, however, duly appeared in Mr. Banks, and a great majority declared for the expulsion of the drawings. Reynolds rose again to explain to them the propriety of Bonomi's drawings being there with Mr. Edwardes's, which were expected, but was interrupted from all quarters, notably by Copley, that that business was over, and that it was irregular to talk upon business that was past and determined. The meeting then proceeded to elect Fuseli an Academician. "A very ingenious artist," says Reynolds, "but no candidate for the Professor's chair."

Reynolds tells us dryly that he "had the honour of receiving the thanks of the Academy for the able and attentive manner in which I had discharged my duty"—no huge boon, apparently, when one considers the way in which the compliment was conveyed. This communication was not signed by the chairman, as provided by the regulations, but by the secretary, who had been rude to the President at the meeting. It was conveyed, too, "in the manner of a common note, closed with a wafer, and presented by the common errand-boy of the Academy."

Reynolds, in reply, sent the following letter to the secretary:—

"Leicester Fields, February 23, 1790.

"SIR,

"I beg you would inform the Council, which I understand meets this evening, with my fixed resolution of resigning the Presidency of the Royal Academy, and consequently my seat as an Academician. As I can no longer be of any use to the Academy as President, it would be still less in my power in a subordinate situation.

I therefore take my leave of the Academy with my sincere wishes for its prosperity, and with all due respect to its members.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble and most obedient servant,

"JOSHUA REYNOLDS."

There is no doubt that the Academy as a body was much troubled by the resignation of the President conveyed by this letter. The members who had supported Reynolds at the meeting made haste to express their regret in a protest which states their view of the proceedings in very plain language, and sums up the facts of the dispute in very able fashion. Sandby, Barry, Opie, Northcote, Rigaud, Nollekens, and Zoffany addressed their fellow-members as follows:—

"We, whose names are underwritten, think it incumbent on us, as paying the due respect we owe to ourselves and our characters, in the most public manner to declare that we disapproved, and do now disapprove, of the conduct of the majority of the Academicians on the 10th of February last past, and that we join in opinion with the President, that it is disgraceful to the Academy that the chair of the Professor of Perspective should have remained so many years vacant; and that the President has been at former elections, and was then, doing his duty in persuading the Academicians to put aside all other candidates and elect him who was qualified to fill the vacant professorship; and more especially as they had at a former meeting elected Mr. Bonomi to the rank of Associate, as a preparatory step to his being a candidate for the above-mentioned office; and that the President's recommendation of so able an artist as Mr. Bonomi for this purpose was laudable, as it implied a careful superintendency over the honour and interest and, we may

add, the existence of the Academy. And they are further of opinion that the President would not have done his duty if he had not—according to the implied order of the Council—desired Mr. Bonomi to send specimens of his abilities for the inspection of the Academicians. They therefore disapprove in the highest degree of the ordering of the specimens of Mr. Bonomi —the only candidate, Mr. Edwardes having declined—to be sent out of the room. And they conceive that the irregularity of this proceeding was much aggravated by its having the appearance of an unprovoked and unmerited personal insult to the President, from whose performances the Arts have received so much honour, and from whose services the Academy has received so many important benefits."

Cool reflection brought the same feeling to the minds of the opponents of Reynolds, and within a fortnight the chief of these, Sir William Chambers, wrote to Sir Joshua asking him to reconsider his decision. From Reynolds's reply it appears that Chambers supported his request with the information that the King had expressed his wish that Reynolds should retain the chair, and also with the less convincing argument that his doing so "would obviate conclusions and aspersions which might prove disagreeable" to Reynolds. The letter gave the painter an opportunity of showing his resentment at what he considered the apostacy of the man who had supported him in the outset in his efforts to fill the Professor's chair, and had headed the revolt at the last. He sent to Chambers a dignified letter, expressive of all respect to the King, but still refusing to alter his decision. This was contained in a covering letter in much more outspoken terms.

"That it will obviate aspersions," he wrote, speaking of the question of his retaining the chair, "I must, to

satisfy you upon this point, beg leave to remind you of what you have said, that you have known me for forty years. In that time you may have known—or you ought not to have continued my acquaintance so long—that I am in a state of reputation to defy unfounded aspersions; and if I had no other reason for quitting than to prove to you, and those who may join with you in this kind of threat, that I am not moved with fear of those aspersions, I would instantly resign, if I had not before resolved on it. That this sacrifice will obviate conclusions that might prove disagreeable to me cannot have much more weight upon my mind. If the natural conclusion be drawn it will be this . . . that I did not like the method of turning out with scorn and every mark of personal ill-will and ill-manners to myself works that are the titles of the candidate to the place he solicits, and which did honour to the Academy."

What Chambers's rather maladroit persuasion failed to do, however, the good sense of the Academy as a body accomplished. At a meeting of that body called for March 13, it was resolved—

"That upon inquiry, it is the opinion of this meeting that the President acted in conformity with the intention of the Council in directing Mr. Bonomi to send in a drawing or drawings to the general meeting, to evince his being qualified for the office of Professor of Perspective; but that the general meeting, not having been informed of this new regulation of the Council, nor having consented to it as the laws of the Academy direct, the generality of the Assembly judged their introduction irregular, and consequently voted for their being withdrawn."

Another resolution, moved by Copley, declared "that Sir Joshua Reynolds's declared objection to his resuming the chair being done away with, a committee be appointed

to wait on Sir Joshua Reynolds requesting him, in obedience to the gracious desires of His Majesty, and in compliance with the wishes of the Academy, he would withdraw his letter of resignation."

West, Copley, Farington, T. Sandby, Bacon, Cosway, Catton, and the secretary accordingly waited on Sir Joshua to report these resolutions. They were received, we are told, with evident marks of satisfaction. His niece, Miss Johnson, who was in London at the time, wrote of this incident: "My uncle was in high spirits, and the moment he saw us he began telling us that he was going that evening to reassume his seat at the Academy . . . as they had all acknowledged themselves wrong." He showed his complete reconciliation by asking the entire deputation to dine with him on the evening of their call.

It may be that his reconciliation with the Academy inspired him to some last efforts with his pencil, and that he was anxious to mark it by the appearance at the exhibition of some of those portraits which had so long been among its chief ornaments. Mary Palmer speaks of his still painting occasionally in March of 1790, and it is supposed that he did not finally relinquish the habit until November of the following year. At the exhibition he attended the King, who appeared there for the first time since his illness, and among the pictures were six portraits of his own, the Lord Rawdon, Mrs. Billington, Sir John Leicester, Mrs. Cholmondeley, Sir James Esdaile, and a portrait of himself.

In December Reynolds delivered his fifteenth and last Discourse. The circumstances of his late relations with the Academy drew to the great room in Somerset House a greater and more enthusiastic audience than ordinary, and the room was crowded. While the President was speaking, a sudden crash was heard, and the company

rushed to the door. Reynolds sat silent, and did not move from his seat. After some little time the greater number of the audience returned to their seats. It was found afterwards that one of the beams of the floor had given way, and that the company narrowly escaped destruction. As Reynolds remarked to Northcote, "If the floor had really fallen, most of the persons assembled must have been crushed to death, and the Arts in this country would have been thrown two hundred years back."

Reynolds's last Discourse was a modest justification of his own attempts at guidance of the students of the Academy. He reviewed what he had said to similar audiences during a period of twenty-one years, and while acknowledging that in the course of his researches he had found and perhaps expressed many precepts and rules which did not seem altogether reconcileable, he claimed to have attempted to bring some order and regulation into the study of the principles upon which the study of art were founded, and to have removed some perplexity and confusion which he imagined all artists and students encountered at some time in considering the variety of styles and excellence of the great works with which the student was surrounded. He made no secret of his intention to make the discourse his last, and he concluded his lecture with an eulogium upon the great artist who had fired his imagination in the student days at Rome, and had remained his idol throughout his working life.

"I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man, and I should desire that the last words I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of Michael Angelo."

Rogers the poet, who was present as a young man, told Leslie that on the conclusion of the lecture, and as Reynolds was descending from the chair, Burke stepped

forward, and, taking his hand, held it while he addressed him in the lines from "Paradise Lost"—

> "The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
> So charming left his voice, that he awhile
> Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear."

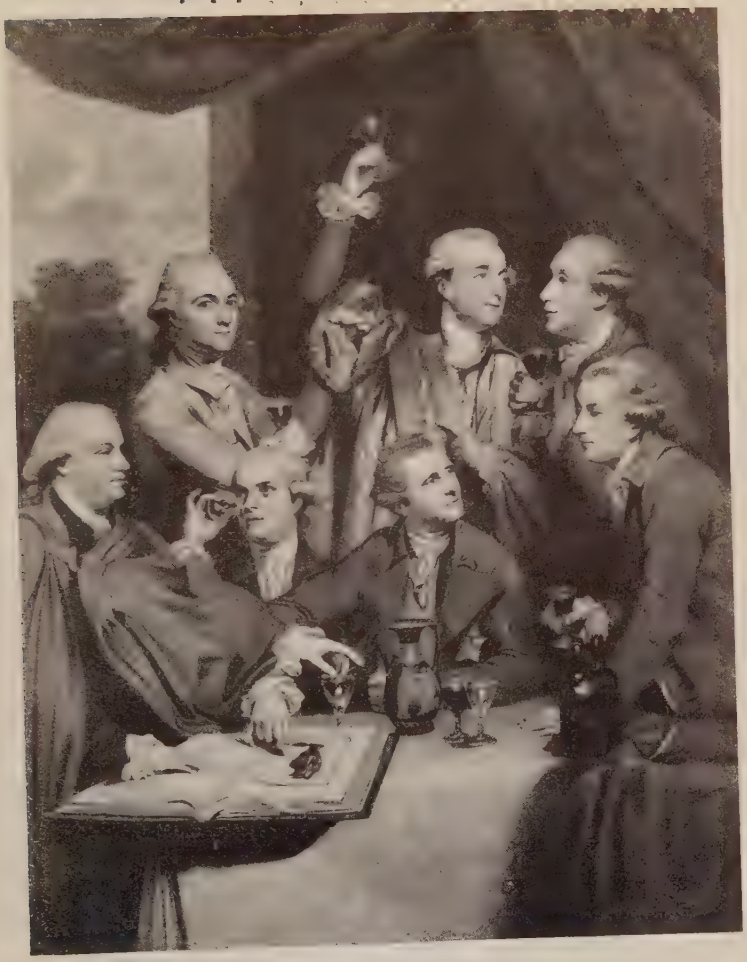
The incident was a touching one, but seems a little theatrical to modern taste. It did not, however, so strike Rogers. "Nobody but Burke could have done such a thing without its appearing formal and theatrical," he said. "But from him it appeared spontaneous and irresistible."

After the first shock of his partial blindness, Reynolds seems to have regained much of his native cheerfulness, and his later days, until immediately before the end, were probably as happy as such days can be. His evenings in London were spent in social enjoyment, as always; he was often with the Burkes at Beaconsfield, and was still in great request at the entertainments of the ladies of his acquaintance. There are two pleasant letters from himself to Lady Upper Ossory written in January, 1791, by which it appears that that lady would take no denial to her invitation to Ampthill, where the amateur actors were again disporting themselves. Reynolds consents to go on there from the Duke of Bedford's at Woburn Abbey accordingly, and incidentally lets us hear that Lady Ossory had worked him an embroidered waistcoat with her own hands, which he thought much too good to wear, and in which he promised never to take snuff. The spring of the same year was enlivened by a little misunderstanding with Northcote, who took as a slight to himself some very good advice tendered to Lord Mayor Boydell, not to initiate a suggested collection of historical pictures by the Lords Mayor, but to confine his patronage to portraiture, and to Mr. Lawrence in particular.

Northcote was much huffed at hearing of this advice from Boydell, thinking himself much injured both as a friend of Reynolds and as a painter both of history and portraits. He let Reynolds know as much through Mr. Desenfans, and there was a solemn conference between the pupil and his old master, from which, however, Northcote did not seem to draw much comfort.

Another distraction of these times was the arrangement of his large and valuable collection of old masters at an exhibition in the Haymarket, where he offered them for sale at prices stated in the catalogue, with some few reservations. We learn from a letter of Burke, written to his co-executor after Reynolds's death, that this collection had cost the painter twenty thousand pounds. It included a Teniers which he had once coveted, and had offered to cover twice over with guineas (about a thousand), but which eventually came to him in exchange for a fancy picture and a portrait of his own. He had previously offered this collection to the Academy at a low price as a nucleus of a school for students, and on the condition that the Academy should purchase the Lyceum in the Strand as their permanent exhibition room. The offer was, however, declined. This exhibition in the Haymarket he called Ralph's Exhibition, the proceeds of the admissions being given as a douceur to his old servant, Ralph Kirkley.

The scheme for erecting a monument to Johnson in St. Paul's also found occupation for Reynolds in these last months. He had used all his influence with the Dean and Chapter to procure their consent to the erection of a statue in the cathedral, both as a tribute to his friend, and also as a precedent which could not fail to benefit the sculptors of that day, and, as he hoped, might lead eventually to the introduction of decorative paintings in the cathedral. The idea of the memorial in Westminster



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Abbey had been abandoned, and the sum of £600 considered suitable for that scheme was doubled for the new proposal. Reynolds had, with much trouble and in the face of Chambers, who opposed him, induced the Council to grant £100 to the fund, and he himself undertook to make up any deficiency in the sum of £1200 required. To his energy in this last year of his life are owing, not only Banks's fine statue of the doctor, but also the introduction of monumental sculpture in St. Paul's, which until then was bare of any decoration of the kind.

As late as September of 1791 there is record of Reynolds in good health and spirits. He had left the carriage in which, on a hot day, he and Malone were returning from a visit to Burke at Hayes, and had walked five miles without any sign of fatigue. "He had at that time," says Malone, "though above sixty years of age, the appearance of a man not much beyond fifty, and seemed as likely to live for ten or fifteen years as any of his younger friends." His end, however, was approaching. In October of 1791 he was much troubled by the formation of a tumour in the blind eye, which he greatly dreaded might deprive him of the sight of the other, although his medical advisers do not seem to have shared his fears. He became much depressed, gave up his attendance at the Academy, and indeed resigned the Presidentship, though his colleagues, with much good feeling, induced him to withdraw his resignation, and to allow West to act as his deputy. There are many touching details of his state at this time recorded in the letters of his friends. Boswell, writing to Temple in November, says—

"My spirits have been still more sunk by seeing Sir Joshua Reynolds almost as low as myself. He has for more than two months past had a pain in his blind eye, the effect of which has been the occasion of a weakness

in the other, and he broods over the dismal apprehension of becoming quite blind. He has been kept so low as to diet that he is quite relaxed and desponding. He who was looked to as perhaps the most happy man in the world is now as I tell you. Your friend Miss Palmer's assiduity and attention to him in every respect is truly charming."

Fanny Burney, whose vain, selfish old father Reynolds, among other friends, had induced to withdraw from her post of dresser to Queen Charlotte, writes in a similiar strain. "I was really quite touched," wrote she. "The expectation of total blindness depresses him inexpressibly, not however inconceivably," a characteristic distinction of the prim Fanny. Reynolds's last evenings were spent at cards apparently. Fanny found Lawrence with his sister, King, and Blagdon assembled with the ailing painter. "Miss Palmer eagerly drew me to herself," continues Fanny, "and recommended Sir Joshua to go on with his cards. He had no spirit to oppose, probably no inclination."

It seems certain that Reynolds died when he did from the want of skill on the part of his medical men to diagnose his case. He retained the sight of the eye about which he was so solicitous to the last. The real trouble was a deranged liver, which fully accounts for depression of spirits which so embittered his last days. This was only discovered a fortnight before he died, and it was only treated when, as Malone says, he was already in the languor of death. The end came quite tranquilly on the Thursday evening, February 23, between eight and nine o'clock. His friend Burke wrote a very eloquent eulogy of the dead man in the house where he was lying within a few hours of his death. Burke himself, Malone, and Metcalfe were the executors of his will.

These gentlemen at once suggested to the Council of

he Academy that Sir Joshua's coffin should be taken to he Academy building the night before his burial, and that he funeral should start thence for St. Paul's. Chambers, vith some lack of taste as it would seem, opposed the proposal both as surveyor of the building, and also because he contended the Council had no power to devote the building or any part of it to such purposes. At a general meeting of the Academy, however, held a day or two later, West informed the meeting that the King had signified his royal will that this mark of respect to the late President should be shown, and gave his commands for its being so ordered. It was in the model room accordingly of the Academy which he had helped to found that its first President lay in state on the 2nd of March, and from its doors that that stately procession in which he was borne to St. Paul's started on the day following.

Those obsequies were notable even in days when such functions were common and much considered. Careful reporters have recorded that it comprised ninety-one carriages, and that the first of these had reached the cathedral before the last had left Somerset House. Among those who saw the body of their friend deposited in the grave in the crypt, where he lies by the side of Wren, were—

The Duke of Dorset,
Duke of Leeds,
Duke of Portland,
Marquess Townshend,
Viscount Palmerston,
Marquess of Abercorn,
Earl of Carlisle,
Earl of Inchiquin,
Earl of Upper Ossory,
Lord Eliot,

who acted as pall-bearers.

Mr. Gwatkin, who had married his niece, Offy Palmer, was Reynolds's chief mourner. The Royal Academy attended as a body with the Associates, students, and officers; and the miscellaneous gentlemen who were

present to do honour to the President form a list of most that was eminent among the men of his day. It is said that Reynolds wished his picture of the angel "Contemplation" carried before his coffin, but that it was thought inadvisable in view of the unknown feelings of the people in such matters.

Reynolds had made his will in his own handwriting in the previous November, immediately after the growth of the tumour on his eye had so shaken his spirits. His niece, Mary Palmer, who had been the nurse of his old age, inherited the bulk of his property, but there were numerous legacies to others of his family and friends. To his sister Francis he left a life interest in £2500, the reversion going to Mary Palmer. To his niece, Mrs. Gwatkin, he left £10,000; to his faithful old servant, Ralph Kirkley, £1000. Burke, as we learn, was indebted to Reynolds at the time of his death for £2000; Reynolds cancelled the bond which he held for that sum, and marked his friendship with the statesman by bequeathing him an additional sum of £2000. He left £200 to each of his executors, and the same sum to Boswell, with a suggestion that if they thought proper they might each purchase a picture from the sale of his collection to keep as a memorial of their friend.

The painter left to Lord Upper Ossory the first choice, and to Lord Palmerston the second choice, of any of his own works in his possession at his death. The first of these chose a Venus and Cupid; the latter the "Infant Academy." He left the "Angel contemplating the Cross from the Nativity" to the Duke of Portland; the portrait of her son to Mrs. Bunbury; to Mrs. Gwyn her own portrait in a turban; miniatures to Mason and Richard Burke, and his watch and seals to his nephew Johnson in Calcutta. There was no mention of his nephews the Palmers, at which they were naturally much hurt; but it

s nearly certain that the omission was an oversight on he part of the painter, who wrote his will hurriedly, and t a time when his mind was much troubled by his pproaching illness.

Mary Palmer, who upon her uncle's death went into Burke's household as his ward, until her marriage with Lord Inchiquin the same year, inherited the residuary estate, which amounted to a very considerable sum.

It is hardly necessary to remark that this will is the record of a very successful life. Reynolds, as we have seen, had lived well and spent freely throughout his career. There were no great extravagances of equipage, but he practised a continuous and lavish hospitality during thirty years; a hospitality which, though without any great elegance, was abundant, and was most certainly the means of the dissipation of a generous yearly income. Although few particulars are known of his private benefactions, it is quite certain that they were considerable, and that many of his friends were the richer for his help. We have seen his generosity to Burke and Johnson, and others have left mention of other exercises of his kindly charity. Taylor was of opinion that Lady Inchiquin, as residuary legatee, inherited money and property of different kinds which amounted to near a hundred thousand pounds, and if we add other legacies to that sum, we may safely state his fortune at a hundred and thirty thousand pounds altogether.

CHAPTER X

THE ARTIST

REYNOLDS'S admirers might wish that he had never written a word upon art; that those solemn Discourses which he prepared so painfully had remained undelivered; and that we had been left to judge of the artist by his work alone. These dissertations, and his three papers in the *Idler* on the same subjects, have been the occasion of much unprofitable discussion. To the painter's enemies they have afforded opportunity for charges of insincerity, of preaching what he did not practise, even of misleading the artistic youth of his day. To his admirers they present the alternative of the difficult task of reconciling the words of the professor and the works of the practician, or of abandoning Sir Joshua as a theorist altogether.

From that early essay in the *Idler*, where Reynolds attributes the whole influence of beauty to custom, and lays it down that "if we were more used to deformity than to beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it and take that of beauty," to the last discourse delivered at the close of his life, where he attempts to distinguish between the greater and the lesser truth, there is hardly a precept of importance laid down by the painter which commends itself to the criticism of to-day, or is of as much value to the student as the meanest work which came from his pencil. As Ruskin has said,

MRS. CARNAC

"he seemed born to teach all error by his precept, and all excellence by his example." There is scarcely a page of the Discourses which does not record one or other of these artistic fallacies of Reynolds the theorist.

The student must never deal with a conception without thinking how Michael Angelo or Raphael would have undertaken the same work; the study of nature must come only after a long probation at the feet of the great masters; Ludovico Carracci was to be taken as a model of style; the grand gusto must be the ambition of all true artists, and could be acquired only by "being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities and details of every kind;" then the student was to seek the ideal of a central type partaking equally "of the activity of the Gladiator, the delicacy of the Apollo, and the strength of the Hercules;" when found, this abstraction was to be clothed, not in garments known to mortal tailors, but in some "general dress and with some general accompaniments." We are told that "the value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed upon it, or the mental pleasure produced by it;" that portrait painting is among the lower exercises of the art; that "sculpture has but one style, that of the antique," and that "it is the very same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry which is pleased with the resemblance of a picture to the original and touched with harmony of music." Here, too, are practical hints for the portrait painter. "He who in his practice of portrait painting wishes to dignify his subject, which we will suppose to be a lady, will not paint her in the modern dress, the familiarity of which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity, and therefore dresses his figure something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness." The landscape painter, too, is

assured that no correctness of form is required in the representation of such objects as "clouds, stumps of trees, rock or broken ground."

These and such as these were the main theories which occupied Sir Joshua in his attempt to instruct the rising artists of his day. Some of them were modified by later pronouncements it is true, and the Discourses were varied once or twice with intelligent and valuable criticisms like the paper dealing with the work of Gainsborough. But Reynolds's ideas on the theory of his art as set out in the fifteen Discourses are fairly represented by the maxims we have quoted. It is futile to contest such theories, which carry their own refutation. The difficulty is to reconcile their profession with the daily work of the man who uttered them. To quote Ruskin again, "He enforced with his lips generalization and idealism, while with his pencil he was tracing the patterns of the belles of his day; he exhorted his pupils to attend only to the invariable, while he himself was occupied in distinguishing every variation of womanly temper; and he denied the existence of the beautiful at the same instant that he arrested it as it passed, and perpetuated it for ever."

It is not in the Discourses alone that this strange contradiction between precept and practice appears. If there is one quality in which Reynolds excels, it is his superb sense of colour. Ruskin places him in the company of the greatest colourists in art. "There have been only seven supreme colourists among the true painters whose works exist," says he, "Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoret, Correggio, Reynolds, and Turner." Northcote was of opinion that he was seeking "the Venetian mode of colouring throughout his life, in the pursuit of which he risked both his fame and his fortune." We know that he bought pictures of the old painters not only for study,

but also to dissect layer by layer, in the hope of discovering the secret of their colour. And yet in theory he seems to have ranked colour in painting as of secondary importance altogether, and we find him at a mature period of his life recording such opinions as these.

"Well-coloured pictures are in more esteem and sell for higher prices than in reason they appear to deserve, as colouring is an excellence of a lower rank than the qualities of correctness, grace, and greatness of character." He explains this preference for good colour, which he evidently thinks unjustified, by the fact that "colouring is an excellence which cannot be transferred by prints or drawings, and but very faintly by copies."

And yet this was the man who risked his chief title to fame, the permanence of his work, by endless experiments in the vehicles which should best preserve the very quality he disparaged, but which he himself sought with an earnestness displayed by few men in the history of art. He would take no process for granted, and would reject no pigment, however unstable, which would give him the result he was looking for at the moment. And in contrast to his estimate of the value of colour in painting we have his own account of the diligence with which he himself sought it.

"We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manners, while others, from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour, and leaving out every colour in its turn, showed every colour I could do without it. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I assume to myself in that respect."

So, too, in the matter of the treatment of costume and accessories, could there be a greater contrast than

that which appears in the maxims of the theoretic Reynolds of the Discourses and the canvases of the practical Reynolds in Leicester Fields? We find in his portraiture little of the classic generalization of raiment of which he was so fond of lecturing; and his treatment of the details of the dress of the day constitutes one of the chief charms of his work. The portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough together bestow a veritable apotheosis upon flounce and furbelow. One has only to glance at some contemporary rendering of the same fashions to realize the grace which those men were able to extract from such seemingly unpromising material; Hogarth, Cotes, and Zoffany, for example, make knee-breeches and wig and powdered hair hideous and ludicrous at the same time. But how different is the result of the manipulation of the same materials by Reynolds or Gainsborough! Who would wish to see the Duchess of Devonshire in anything but the coiffure that she wears, or Mrs. Graham without her feathers, or the Dilettante groups without their wigs? We are told that the fashion of powdered hair was given its vogue by the flighty ladies of the French court, who were so captivated by the appearance of a mountebank who sought an extra laugh by dipping his head in a flour barrel, that they adopted a similar decoration for themselves. If ever so silly a mode could be justified at all, it surely receives justification in its aspect which is preserved by Reynolds and Gainsborough. "Reject all accidents of fashion," said the Reynolds of the Discourses, "and place your lady in classic dress of a general character for dignity;" but the practical painter in Leicester Fields took care to miss no detail of those elaborate creations of the modistes of his times, turned them all to the purposes of his design, and glorified them in the process. We get a shrewd notion of how the painter regarded these particulars of costume

which the President regarded as distractions incompatible with the dignity of the grand gusto, by a remark of his reported by Northcote. Some fellow-artist deplored the unfitness of the dresses of the period—coats, wigs, hats and bonnets—for pictorial effect. "Never mind," replied Reynolds, "they all have light and shade."

The difficulty of reconciling the theories of Reynolds the professor with the practice of Reynolds the portrait painter perhaps becomes easier by conceiving his artistic personality as of a twofold character. One part of that personality inspired the President of the Academy, the disciple of Michael Angelo, and the prophet of the grand style; the other controlled the practical artist who went to his painting-room as the lawyer went to his office or the merchant to his counting-house, and performed his daily task with the same conscience and the same regularity. The first Reynolds, we believe, dreamed of a time when he should put his theories to the proof and display to the world the rebirth of the grand style in the work of a modern artist. The time never arrived, because Sir Joshua's understanding was much more sensitive to influence from without than subject to impulses from within. But there were occasional experiments which resulted in the Ugolinos and Didos which we know.

We are confirmed in this view of Reynolds's personality by his recorded opinions upon portraiture, and upon his own work in particular. We see that in one of his Discourses he ranged portraiture among the lower ranks of painting; and he recommended it to Barry as a means only to the end of the grand style. The only merit he claimed for his own work was that it enhanced the best features of his sitters. "Lovers had acknowledged to him," he said, "after having seen his portraits of their mistresses, that the originals had appeared still more lovely to them than before by their excellencies being so

distinctly pourtrayed." "His own opinion of his works was so humble," said Northcote, "that I have heard him confess his terror at seeing them exposed to the bright light of the sun."

The amazing quantity of Reynolds's finished work, too, seems to help us in distinguishing his double artistic individuality. The researches of Mr. Graves and Mr. Cronin credit Reynolds with about fifteen hundred completed canvases. These, without counting studies, replicas, or unfinished works, and after making allowance for the periods in which we know he was away or not at work, provide a picture for every week of his working life. At one time of his career, as we learn from Northcote, the canvases were sent home to his clients before the paint had dried upon them. It is certain Reynolds never believed that pictures in the grand style were to be produced at this speed, or that any man could ever hope to paint fifteen hundred of them.

To sum up, Reynolds, we are convinced, forgot all about his theories of art, and his recipes for the grand gusto when before his easel, just as when he assumed the gown of the President and turned to the composition of his Discourses, he thought little of the painter in Leicester Fields. In this there is no reproach. Much of the world's finest work is the product of the honest toil of the workman engaged in the honourable occupation of getting his own living. "To support themselves honourably," says Ruskin of Reynolds and Gainsborough, "pass the hours of life happily, please their friends and leave no enemies—was not this all that duty could require or prudence recommend?" And so it seems matter of rejoicing that so little of Reynolds's time was spent talking of what he imagined, and so much in painting what he saw.

There are many contemporary notices of his absorbing zeal for his daily work. "He was never so happy as

when in his painting-room," says Northcote, "and he often confessed that when he had complied with the invitations of the nobility to spend a few days of relaxation at their country seats, although every luxury was afforded which could possibly be desired, he always returned home like one who had been kept so long without satisfying food." We are told too that he began every new canvas with the determination to make it the best work of his life, and that he would admit no poverty of beauty in the sitter as an excuse for a poor canvas, contending, as he did, that there was material for the true artist in every human face. It is only necessary to remember his treatment of such subjects as the head of Oliver Goldsmith to recognize the completeness of the illustration of the maxim in his own work. A work once finished was entirely dismissed from his mind. "I have heard him say," says Northcote, "that while he was engaged in painting a picture, he never knew when to quit it or leave off, and it seemed to him as if he could be content to work upon it the whole remainder of his life, encouraged by the hope of improving it; but that when it was once gone from him and out of his house, he as earnestly hoped he should never see it again." This attitude towards his own completed work, the disinclination of his mind to dwell upon ideas or designs which had already received fulfilment at his hands, helps to explain the astonishing variety of his work.

Reynolds possessed a mind which was eminently of the receptive, as opposed to the creative, cast. He nowhere appears to us the man of vivid imagination, seeking to express ideas originating in intellectual processes, but always as the painter of mental images, formed by a brain of an exceptionally receptive and retentive character, fed constantly by the true painter's eye, and informed by an almost faultless taste. His natural faculties

made Reynolds's understanding eclectic and accumulative at the same time. An impression once received by Reynolds's mind seems always to have been at his disposal. It has seemed strange to many who have followed him in his wanderings through the cities of Northern Italy that his notes echo hardly a whisper of admiration for the works of those early masters which are now accepted as the chief artistic treasures of the world. There is little mention or praise of those great forerunners of the men he made his idols—Cimabue and Giotto, Angelico, the Lippis, Botticelli, Crivelli, Borgognone, and the rest. Even Perugino, who was so close to his beloved Raphael, is accorded only a bare mention as the painter of many pictures in and about his native city. It is true that Reynolds, like ourselves, was of his own time; and his day was without those eloquent voices which in our own have led to the better understanding of the great primitives. In Reynolds's day the most worthless section of Italian art was the most prized, and the prevailing taste was represented by men like Horace Walpole, enthusiastic about the Carraccis and Domenichino, and blind to all else. Yet it is certain that, although Reynolds made no written note of the works of those early masters, his all-observing eye gathered some of their merits, at least, to add to the garnered treasures of his mind. The retentive cast of that mind, and the readiness with which Reynolds was able to turn at will to the impressions it registered so faithfully, seem perfectly illustrated by some remarks of his on those early painters quoted by Cotton, remarks made apparently for use in one of his Discourses, and certainly years after he had last seen the works of which he speaks.

"It must be confessed that simplicity and truth, of which we are now speaking, is oftener found in the old masters that preceded the great age of painting than it

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was ever in that age, and certainly much less since. . . . The old Gothic artists, as we call them, deserve the attention of a student much more than many later artists. In other words, the painters before the age of Raphael are better than the painters since the time of Carlo Marratti. The reason is, the former have nothing but truth in view; whereas the others do not even endeavour to see for themselves, but receive by report only what has before passed through many hands, and consequently acquired the tinge of a mannerist, or, as a poet would say, mixed with fable, having no longer the simplicity of truth. As we say of wine, it has lost its raciness."

It was those same faculties of selection, reception, and retention, fostered as they were by continual study of the older masters, which enabled him to bring the typical qualities of many of the greatest artists into the treatment of his own subjects. There is ample evidence that Reynolds's study of the old masters lasted long after his return to Italy—throughout his life, in fact. He has himself admitted, in the frankest manner, the debt he owed to those great ones, and the means he took of availing himself of their teaching. After deploring his lack of academical training as a boy, which denied to him the inventiveness which comes from a knowledge of the human form, he deliberately turned to the old masters as the sources of his artistic inspiration. "It appeared to me too late," he said, "when I went to Italy to acquire that readiness of invention which I observed others to possess. I considered myself as playing a great game, and instead of beginning to save money, I laid it out faster than I got it, in purchasing the best examples of art that could be procured. The possession of pictures by Titian, Vandyke, Rembrandt, etc., I considered the best kind of wealth. By carefully studying the works of great masters, we find that certain niceties of expression

are capable of being executed which otherwise might be beyond the reach of art. If I had never seen the works of Correggio, I should perhaps never have remarked in nature the expression which I found in one of his pieces." He admitted too that he was at times under the spell of particular masters. Lord Spencer lent him a Rembrandt, the portrait of Vandel, the Dutch poet, which he kept for some years, during which its study much influenced his practice. So, too, we are able to recognize reminiscences of this or that great man of the past in a score of his canvases. Correggio was certainly altogether too much in his mind when he painted the "Nativity" for the Oxford window; Veronese appears in the Dilettante groups; Michael Angelo in the "Mrs. Siddons;" Titian in the "Iphigenia;" Holbein is translated in the "Master Crewe;" "Mrs. Hartley" reminds us of Lionardo; the "St. Geneviève" of lesser men, like Guido; and the merits of one or other appear in a hundred of his delicate presentations of the feminine beauty of his day.

This faculty of reminiscence which Reynolds retained unimpaired through his life adds enormously to the interest of his work. It effectively prevented any possibility of monotony in his style; and it provides an answer in part at least, to the charge of plagiarism which has so often been brought against him as a painter. Memories even of his old days with Hudson appeared at times in his work. His portrait of Lady Elizabeth Montague, in the possession of the Duke of Buccleuch, painted in 1755, has many of the characteristics of his first master, glorified it is true, but still unmistakable. The clearness of outline, the precision of attitude, and the vacant stare at the spectator, could have originated in no other school. Curiously enough, when he came to paint the same lady's son, the young Duke of Buccleuch, thirty-five years later, much the same qualities appeared

in his portrait, as is quite evident when the two are seen together. It is possible, of course, that he had the early picture before him when he came to paint the second at the close of his life, and that he deliberately set himself to make a pair. It is more likely, however, that the second portrait is an interesting illustration of those powers of reminiscence which are so characteristic of his artistic understanding.

Charges of plagiarism in an artist of Reynolds's capacity need little refutation. His own borrowings no doubt attracted more notice than was necessary, because he condemned the practice in others, and defended it in his Discourses at the same time. "A readiness in taking such hints as escape the dull and ignorant," said he, "makes, in my opinion, no inconsiderable part of the faculty of mind which is called genius." We imagine that much of Reynolds's plagiarism was instinctive and unconscious; but if it needed defence, there are a thousand precedents in art of all kinds to justify him. Did not Raphael himself take his Graces bodily from an antique group at Siena? Reynolds's own case could not be better stated than by Walpole—

"When a single posture is imitated from an historic picture and applied to a portrait in a different dress and with new attributes, this is not plagiarism but quotation; and a quotation from a great author with a novel application of the sense has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste, and may have more merit than the original. Is there not humour and satire in Sir Joshua's reducing the swaggering and colossal haughtiness of Henry the Eighth to the boyish jollity of Master Crewe. Sir Joshua is not a plagiary, but will beget a thousand. The exuberance of his invention will be the grammar of future painters of portraits."

The other, and perhaps the most important of faculties

which went to complete Reynolds's artistic personality was that mental alertness and sensibility to new ideas and impressions which seem to have been almost as keen at the end of his career as at the beginning. It was this quality, most assuredly, which enabled him to seize every incident or opportunity which might give a distinction to his subject proper to itself alone, and which distinguishes his portraiture as a whole above all other in existence. It was this quality which placed Keppel on the seashore in that early canvas which was really the beginning of modern portraiture; which represented Heathfield as "locking up Gibraltar irrevocably;" which placed Hunter musing among his anatomies; suggested languor and sensuousness in his Kitty Fishers and Nelly O'Briens, grace and refinement in his duchesses, purity and innocence in his mothers and children. It was this faculty which helped him to preserve on canvas the momentary expression peculiar to a personality which we see to such perfection in such portraits as those of Sterne or of David Garrick, expressions which could never last through the fatigue of a sitting, or long enough for a less consummate artist to record. One thinks, indeed, of Reynolds as making a mental note of the aspect and expression which he recognized as typical of his subject, and using the sitter afterwards for reference in a manner differing in degree and not in kind from the way he would employ a lay figure.

We have watched this faculty of Reynolds's at work at frequent intervals in our story of his life; how, for instance, he would seize the attitude of an angry child to introduce some charming incident like that of the Marlborough family group, of a sleepy one to produce a Babes in the Wood, and a hundred instances might be gathered from an analysis of his works. He would sometimes notice an effect of light and shade on a sitter's

face as she came into the room, arrest her in the doorway, as it were, seize his pencil, and in a few moments preserve the accidental effect on canvas, and make it the key of the scheme of his picture. Such mental activity as this could produce nothing but freshness and variety even in portraits produced by the thousand.

Lastly, this intelligent openness of mind made him welcome any criticism which he thought genuine. It is true he received little but flattering criticism from his friends; but this he always took at its true worth, and it affected him not at all. He had nothing but contempt for the connoisseur, and, as Northcote said, was never thinking how his work would appear to the man in the next street, but of how it would look by the side of Titian or Rembrandt. On the other hand, nothing delighted him more than the criticism of natural and ingenuous critics. In one of his notes he remarks, "There are few spectators of a painter's works, learned or unlearned, who, if they can be induced to speak their real sensations, would not be profitable to the artist. The only opinions of which no use can be made are those of half-learned connoisseurs who have quitted nature and have not acquired art." He saw with delight a young child mimic the poses of a whole gallery of portraits, and declared that her unconscious attitudes were the best possible criticisms of the arrangement of his sitters made by each artist. His attitude towards genuine criticism is very happily illustrated in an anecdote related by Woodburn the picture dealer to E. M. Ward, who repeated it to Tom Taylor. Woodburn, as a boy of fourteen, went on an errand to Reynolds's painting-room, where the artist was at work on the portrait of a sitter the boy knew. Seeing that he looked at the canvas keenly, and finding that he knew the original, Reynolds asked him if he thought it like. "Yes, sir," replied the

boy; "but you have not given the face colour enough." Reynolds looked at the canvas for a moment, and said, "You are right, my boy." He proceeded to scumble some dry vermilion into the cheeks. "That's enough. Stop! stop!" cried the boy, when he thought the painter had gone far enough, and was then rather frightened at his own forwardness. He was reassured by Sir Joshua, who repeated, "Quite right, my boy, quite right."

Apart altogether from its purely artistic qualities, Reynolds's work has a value which is almost inestimable. Sir Joshua has preserved for posterity the aspect of the chief figures of his times with a perfection and completeness unequalled by any other portrait painter. The England of Reynolds's day was eminently the England of a relatively few personalities to whom for good or evil the destinies of the country were committed. These men dominated Parliament, they officered the services, filled the public offices, administered the law, and governed the dependencies of the country. Reynolds lived among these men, and, with a few notable exceptions, two generations of them passed through his painting-room to leave their images behind for us, and to provide a national possession which is literally priceless. A lucky chance might have taken Chatham and Walpole into Reynolds's painting-chair in the beginning of his career, and William Pitt towards its close; and one might have wished for his impression of the aspect of a soldier like Wolfe, a courtier like Bute, a poet like Gray, or of a demagogue like Wilkes. But what a gallery he has left us as it is! We have only to think of those forty years of the century during which his pencil was so busy, without the results he has left us, to be convinced of the value of Reynolds's contribution to our knowledge of the human history of those times. To whom but Reynolds and the admirable engravers whom his work inspired do we owe our

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conceptions of the statesmen, the fighting men, the men of letters and science, the great lawyers and divines, the orators and the actors of those days? Imagine the features of Rockingham and Richmond, Temple, Pelham, Pulteney, Shelburne, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, Thurlow, Mansfield, Dunning, Johnson, Goldsmith, Hunter, Banks; of Anson, Boscawen, the Keppels, Barré, Gibbon, Windham, Hood, Rodney, Garrick, Siddons, Foote, Heathfield, Clive, Hastings, left to be recorded by the men of the rank of those who preceded him, by the Knellers or the Hudsons, and see what the student of the past owes to Reynolds. Add to such a list the names of the hundreds of sitters who peopled the country houses and sat in Parliament, who strolled in St. James's and led the fashion, and who with their wives and children were painted with a grace and refinement never equalled in portraiture except on a much smaller scale by his contemporary Gainsborough, and we may see how completely the human interest of his times is preserved in the canvases of Joshua Reynolds.

It is difficult at this day to decide how much or how little of Reynolds's own handiwork appears in the great number of canvases which are attributed to him by experts. The heads, certainly, no one else was permitted to touch; but it is just as certain that from the first he largely availed himself of the assistance of drapery men and assistants in accessories and background. It was the usual practice of artists before his time and since, and Reynolds himself made no secret of it. We have seen how he remarked that no man made money by the work of his own hands alone, and he quoted the case of Rubens and Van Egmont in defence of the practice.

Northcote, no doubt, often assisted in this way, though Toms was his chief aid until 1777. There was some other unnamed assistant or copyist, whose death was

deplored in 1786. In a letter written in October of that year, quoted by Cotton, is the following passage: "I am sorry that Sir Joshua Reynolds's copyist is dead, as he was a very excellent one."

There is an amusing letter on the same subject, written by Lord Bath to Mrs. Montague, respecting his portrait, painted in 1761 for that lady, and recording what his lordship evidently thought an important discovery. The letter passed with the picture into the possession of the nation, when the portrait of Lord Bath, now in the National Portrait Gallery, was acquired from Lord Rokeby.

"London, Thursday, October 15, 1761.

"I was yesterday with Mr. Reynolds, and have fixed Fryday next at twelve to finish the picture. I have discovered a secret, by being often at Mr. Reynolds's, that I fancy he is sorry I should know. I find that none of these great painters finish any of their pictures themselves. The same person—but who he is I know not—works for Ramsay, Reynolds, and another called Hudson. My picture will not come from that person till Thursday night, and on Fryday it will be totally finished, and ready to send home."

There are many notes, too, in Reynolds's diaries of memoranda to send finished portraits to be copied in duplicate. As early as 1759 we read, "To send Mrs. Fortescue's and Mr. Shirley's portraits to be copied." In later years Northcote, doubtless, made many of these, and it is almost certain that much of his work to-day passes for that of the master in those subjects which are known to be in duplicate. Pack, too, a native of Norwich, is mentioned by Cotton as having copied many works of Reynolds with great accuracy.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN

REYNOLDS'S appearance is tolerably familiar to most of us from one or other of those admirable portraits from his own pencil. There seems much attractive candour in all those renderings of his own personality—the boyish delight in his art and a new attitude of the youthful figure at the National Portrait Gallery; the complacency of the President and Doctor of Laws of the official portraits; the frank insistence on his infirmities in the uplifted hand of the Streatham picture, and in the big-rimmed spectacles of the King's picture at Buckingham Palace. Farington completes the image left on our minds by those varied presentations of the outward aspect of the man—

"In stature Sir Joshua was rather under the middle size. He was in height nearly five feet six inches, of a florid complexion, roundish, blunt features, and of a lively pleasing aspect; not corpulent, though something inclined to it."

It is probable that Reynolds throughout his life suffered from a lack of exercise, combined with a habit of generous living. His youth seems to have passed with few of the games and sports which fall to the lot of most boys, and there is scarcely any record of active exercise during his manhood. It is possible, indeed, that his life, which was ended by a liver complaint, might

have been prolonged, had his zeal for his work allowed of opportunities for physical exertion other than that of walking a few feet daily about his easel.

We take Reynolds's mind to have been of the impressionable and retentive order, subject to influences from the outside to an extraordinary degree, seldom yielding impressions once received, and alert and sensitive to new ideas to the end. His intellect was of an eminently useful order; it stored facts and impressions to which he could turn at will at any portion of his career, but by which he was entirely dominated at none. He had an almost morbid longing for order and punctuality, for the generalization of principles, and for the reduction of practice to set rules—rules which he himself seldom employed, and which had little or no effect upon his art, but the ordering of which remained an intellectual exercise of his mind throughout his life. We think of Reynolds as a steady watchful observer of all that came before his eyes—never in a hurry, regarding everything, missing little likely to be of use to him, and making mental notes which always remained at his disposal.

The impressions received by such a nature as this during the period of keen perceptions of boyhood and youth were likely to have a lasting effect upon the career of the man, and there is little doubt that Reynolds's character was greatly influenced by the ideas he imbibed in those early days in Devonshire. He heard from his father, or perhaps from old Mr. Mudge, that "the great principle of being happy in this world is not to mind or be affected by small things." "To this rule he constantly adhered," says Farington, "and the habit of controlling his mind greatly contributed to that evenness of temper which enabled him to live pleasantly with persons of all descriptions. Placability of temper may be said to have been his characteristic."

We have little doubt too that the companionship of such boys as the Edgcumbes and Keppels of his youth gave him ideas and standards of conduct which, combined with his own gentle breeding, were later to make him the chosen companion of the best society of his day. The artistic impressions which he received from the works of Gandy certainly dominated his style of painting throughout his career. We have only to turn to the works of Richardson, from which, as he admitted to Johnson, he received his first aspirations as an artist, to see how his professional life was affected by the early study of that author.

"A portrait-painter," wrote Richardson, "must understand mankind and enter into their characters and express their minds as well as their faces; and as his business is chiefly with people of condition, he must think as a gentleman and a man of sense, or it will be impossible to give each their true and proper resemblance.

"The painting, too, must be like Eden before the fall; no turbulent passions must enter there. The way to be an excellent painter is to be an excellent man, and these united make a character which would shine even in a better world than this."

Such sentences as these, which he must often have pondered over as a boy, seem almost prophetic of the career of the Reynolds we know.

If we read his life aright, Reynolds received the later impressions which were to develop his character both as man and artist mainly by his powers of observation, and through the avenues of his eyes and ears almost alone. His two years in Italy were spent in little else than looking at frescoes and pictures, and in storing up the mental memoranda which were the result of that method of study. By the assimilation of the impressions gathered in those seemingly unproductive years Reynolds acquired

that faultless taste which was later to distinguish even the feeblest of his work. His reason may have told him that it was expedient to form a style upon such and such a master, whose sentimentality or self-consciousness was likely to appeal to the false taste of the day, but his instinct was a safer guide. And so he wandered through those churches and galleries and submitted his mind to the silent influence of the men whose works he saw around him, until, as Ruskin said, he arose from the feet of those great masters to take his place among them. It was that harvest of the eye, gathered steadily through those fruitful years in Italy, which fed Reynolds's artistic understanding, and enabled him to turn to the persons of his fellow-countrymen and women and present them upon canvas with a grace and refinement which is, perhaps, without parallel in portraiture.

There is little trace of any wide reading among Reynolds's papers or recorded conversations. We quoted Malone in an earlier chapter to show that his occupations in England left little opportunity for reading, and that he turned to the most intellectual men of his day in order to gather from their conversation the knowledge he had no time to acquire from books. Intimate conversation, such as he held for many years with men like Burke and Johnson, must have been a liberal education indeed. Of Burke, we are told, he had the greatest admiration, and he is reported as agreeing with Johnson, who once declared that he considered his mind superior to his own. His relations with Johnson we know, and have seen how ready Reynolds was to acknowledge the benefits he received from his contact with that great intellect. It was from his intimacy with such men that the painter acquired whatever notions he possessed upon literature. Heretical as the opinion would have seemed a hundred years ago, the fact goes some way to explain the poverty of Reynolds's

literary ideas, and the poorness of his taste in letters, which we hold to be undoubted. Literary taste was really at a very low ebb during Reynolds's time; Shakespeare was hopelessly mauled by the managers without protest, and plays drew audiences which in more critical times would be hooted off the stage. The painter lived through a barren period of English letters, which produced little of the first rank, beyond a few poems by Goldsmith, and a few hundreds of lines by Gray. And the fame of Johnson himself, the accepted head of the profession of letters, rests little upon his criticism or his authorship, and much upon his humanity and the force of his personality and conversation.

It is little wonder, therefore, that Reynolds, who drew his ideas of literature and poetry from such sources, has left little evidence of any great taste in letters. One hardly recalls his quoting a single line of poetry, and the few of his critical remarks which have been preserved are not remarkable for their acumen. In some notes, intended apparently for Johnson's edition of Shakespeare, for example, he lays it down, "Whatever is expressed in common words, colloquial language, is never, nor can be, forcibly expressed to the imagination . . . the mode of expression, which you hear every day and on every occasion, must in nature be feeble, and have lost the power of touching and affecting us." But surely he had only to turn to Shakespeare himself to discover that the finest thoughts are most often expressed in those simple words which most easily kindle the imagination by the use of the symbols it best understands.

Reynolds made once a shrewd remark that Homer first wrote the *Iliad*, and that Aristotle subsequently provided rules for the writing of an epic, a remark which is of that pregnant order which seems worthy of record. But we like less his deprecation of blank verse in tragedy.

This, he insisted, was "artificial, a thing got up for the occasion," a plea which may be readily admitted, but claimed also as an essential virtue in a production like a tragedy, which at its freest is nothing if not a convention and an artifice. This lack of taste, however, is no great reproach to a man like Reynolds, who spent a life absorbed in the practice of a sister art, and it seems a mistake on the part of some of his biographers to claim for him an accomplishment which he did not possess. He was not a fluent writer, and the more ambitious of his literary performances, like his Discourses, though respectable, have none of the inspiration of his painting. His times and circumstances were against him in this particular, and he shared this lack of taste with other great men of his time. Was it not his friend Charles Fox who declared that he did not like Milton, and believed that Shakespeare's fame would have stood higher had he never written *Hamlet?*

In his social intercourse, as in his art, we think of Reynolds chiefly as an observer, and as a listener rather than as a talker. "Always ready to be amused with whatever was going forward," says Malone, "he possessed an ardent thirst for knowledge, and was anxious to obtain information in every subject that was presented to his mind." Reynolds's share in those famous conversations often bears witness to his shrewdness of mind and to his powers of observation. "All games of recreation," he once observed, "are an imitation of enmity." He remarked to Johnson that he took "the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and wit, and of his understanding by the remarks of others which he repeated." Johnson agreed. Reynolds continued, "The real character of a man is found out by his pleasures." "Yes, sir," replied Johnson, "no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures."

Burke said of Reynolds that he had a keen perception

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of the humorous side of things, a quality of his mind which seems well illustrated by a remark reported by Northcote, in which Reynolds quotes an alderman at some banquet. "Mr. Reynolds, whenever you are at a venison feast, I advise you not to speak during dinner-time, as in endeavouring to answer your questions I have just swallowed a fine piece of the fat entire without tasting its flavour."

Although no ardent politician, he was, nevertheless, a devoted disciple of the party among whom were so many of his friends, the chief articles of whose creed he shared. Thus, in the early days of the struggle he was a firm believer in the ultimate success of the American colonists. Northcote records that he made a bet in the manner usual in his day, which registers this belief of his very plainly. "He received five guineas from each of several gentlemen to return £1000 if ever he painted the portrait of General Washington in England," which he engaged not to refuse to do if that great man should have appeared in London as a prisoner of war.

If Reynolds has received something like canonization at the hands of two of his biographers at least, there have not been wanting others who have deliberately assumed the *rôle* of devil's advocate, and have pleaded in that capacity to the best of their abilities. Those with whom he lived had nothing but good to say of Reynolds; it was reserved for others who came after him to discover spots in his character, to find cold indifference in the reports of his placidity of temper, selfishness in his conviviality, and hardness of heart in the very eulogies of his friends.

The first of Reynolds's detractors was William Blake, who may, however, be regarded as a contemporary of Reynolds's later career, as he was thirty-five at Sir Joshua's death. Blake hardly ranks as a biographer, but he makes up for lack of volume in his observations by a

vigour of expression which is altogether engaging. His views upon the life and conversation of Reynolds are all contained in a set of remarks with which he annotated a copy of Malone's Life, which is now in the British Museum. These notes are already familiar to students of the poet, but are less well known in connection with Reynolds. They are so virulent, and yet so harmless and amusing in their virulence, that they seem to merit attention.

On the title-page of Malone's first volume Blake thus states the text of his discourse: "This man was hired to depress art. This is the opinion of Will Blake; my proofs of this opinion are given in the following notes."

There are few proofs, indeed, to be found among Mr. Blake's observations, but a perfect wealth of abuse and invective. His charges, too, lack precision. "I always considered," he says, "that such artists as Reynolds are at all times hired by the Satans for the depression of art, a pretence of art, to destroy art." Blake's grievance, however, is plain enough. It is the old story: Reynolds found purchasers for his work; Blake did not.

"Having spent the vigour of my youth and genius under the oppression of Sir Joshua and his gang of cunning, hired knaves without employment and, as much as could possibly be, without bread, the reader must expect to read in all my remarks on these books nothing but indignation and resentment. . . . The neglect of Fuseli's Milton in a country pretending to the encouragement of art is a sufficient apology for my vigorous indignation, *if, indeed, the neglect of my own powers had not been.*"

Blake was particularly furious with Reynolds for his placid theory as to the origin and nature of genius, a quality which he held to be attainable by pains and taking of thought. This was the very opposite of Mr. Blake's views on the subject, who contended that genius

was born with the man, and that he himself presented a not unworthy specimen of the breed. The following Discourse," he writes at the head of the third, "is particularly interesting to blockheads, as it endeavours to prove that there is no such thing as inspiration, and that any man of a plain understanding may, by thieving from others, become a Michael Angelo."

Poor Blake follows Reynolds through each of the fifteen Discourses with every variety of opprobrious epithet. "Hypocrite," "servile," "contemptible," "virtuous ass," are the mildest expressions of his vocabulary. "I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed," wrote Reynolds of his feelings in the Sistine Chapel. "A liar," notes Mr. Blake; "he never was abashed in his life, and never felt his ignorance." "A fool's eye is not to be a criterion," is another of his remarks about Reynolds's observations in Rome. Burke, apparently, was one of the "cunning hired knaves," as witness Mr. Blake's account of his treatment of the eminent Barry.

"Barry painted a picture for Burke equal to Raphael or Michael Angelo. Burke used to show the picture to his friends and say, 'I gave twenty guineas for this horrible daub.'"

The President's infirmities do not escape. Malone mentions how, in company with only one person, he heard very well without the aid of a trumpet. "A sly dog," says Blake. He was of opinion, apparently, that Reynolds's friends were in danger of contamination by his dreadful personality. "Such men as Goldsmith ought not to have been the companions of such men as Reynolds." He even follows him with a jeer to his tomb, and comments upon Malone's statement that certain dukes and peers held his pall—"a mock." Finally he obliged with a threnody, which is distinctly inferior to the Songs of Innocence—

"When Sir Joshua Reynolds died,
All nature was degraded;
The King dropp'd a tear into the Queen's ear,
And all his pictures faded."

Much may be forgiven Blake, both as a man of genius, and as an artist who failed where the object of his envy found success. His ragings, too, are so vehement in their absurdity that they overshoot the mark, and are even humorous. Reynolds's first real detractor was the industrious Scot, Allan Cunningham, who was certainly no genius, was without the excuse of professional jealousy for the rancour with which he pursued the memory of the painter, and was quite innocent of humour in his method of displaying it. Nearly fifty years after Reynolds's death Cunningham published his collection of "Lives of British Painters," in which he devotes some hundred pages to the life of Sir Joshua. To this account of the painter he brought no single fact which was not already preserved in the Lives by Northcote and Malone, but he deliberately took the plain tales of those writers and treated them with an ingenuity of perversion which is altogether extraordinary.

Northcote was alive when Cunningham's "Life" appeared, and luckily discussed the work with Hazlitt. "It is all, or nearly all, taken from my account," he said; "and yet the author misrepresents or contradicts everything I say—I suppose, to show that he is under no obligation to me." This is indeed the mildest criticism of Cunningham's treatment of his subject. He has no single good word to say of Reynolds as a man, very little of his friends, and finds the meanest of motives in the relations of one with the other. He sneers at Reynolds from the cradle to the grave. We have already noted the way in which he treated the good-natured intention of Reynolds to present Mr. Craunch, who

befriended him as a boy, with a silver cup; his comments upon Reynolds's relations with the friends of his prime are not less malignant. Speaking of the painter's intercourse with Johnson, Goldsmith, and Burke, he says—

"Reynolds had other merits—than wit—not unworthy of the consideration of men so out of favour with fortune at that time as Johnson, Goldsmith, and Burke; he had a heavy purse and a hospitable table." He speaks later of "the sluttish abundance" of that same table. All the relations of those friends, according to this amiable biographer, were governed by the considerations of profit and loss. Johnson once uttered a very eloquent eulogy, already quoted, of one of the aspects of Reynolds's portraiture, which he said was employed in "renewing the affections of the absent and continuing the presence of the dead." Outsiders might surely have accepted that sentence as a tribute of one friend to the lifework of another. To Cunningham it is only the current coin in which Johnson paid Reynolds for the food he ate in Leicester Square.

"By an opinion so critically sagacious," says he, "and an apology for portrait painting which appeals so effectually to the kindly side of human nature, Johnson repaid a hundred dinners."

The slightest endowment of a sense of humour might have prevented Cunningham from thus naïvely revealing in his own nature those qualities which unkind critics have at times pointed at as typical of his fellow-countrymen.

We learn that Garrick was often at Reynolds's table because he loved to be where greater men were. "Disappointment and unmerited neglect," it appears, "roughened Johnson; while his 'trade' only polished Reynolds." "He who would succeed as a portrait-painter must practise the patience and courtesy of a fine lady's

physician," he adds. It was that same quality of flattery which Cunningham found most conspicuous in the work of Reynolds. "He would have given to Colonel Charteris an aspect worthy of a President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice." The practice of this flattery, he thought, "helped to smooth his tongue." It seems idle to refute such charges as these made by a man who never knew Sir Joshua, and yet Northcote's information on this very point seems worth quoting.

"In one part of the new Life it is said that Sir Joshua, seeing the ill effects that Hogarth's honesty and bluntness had upon his prospects as a portrait-painter, had learned the art to make himself agreeable to his sitters, and mix up the oil of flattery with his discourse as assiduously as with his colours. This is far from the truth. Sir Joshua's manners were indeed affable and obliging, but he flattered nobody, and, instead of gossiping or making it his study to amuse his sitters, minded only his own business.

"Another thing remarkable to show how little Sir Joshua crouched to the great is, that he never even gave them their proper titles. I never heard the words 'Your lordship' or 'Your ladyship' come from his mouth; nor did he ever say 'Sir' in speaking to any one but Dr. Johnson."

Cunningham repeats what Northcote declared to be a fact—that Reynolds depended upon one or other of his friends—Burke, Malone, or Boswell—for his biography, but he manages to introduce his usual malevolence into the narration.

"But his chief dependence for his biography was on Burke, whose talents he rated even above those of Johnson, and whose service he sought to secure by a donation of £4000. . . . When his pencil could no longer please, nor his pen sign away the thousands in his

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purse, he was neglected or forgotten by persons who had followed or flattered him."

The latest and the most notable of the critics of Reynolds's character is Sir Walter Armstrong, who in that fine volume published in 1898 arrives at much the same estimate of the man as Allan Cunningham. It is needless, however, to say that his views are expressed without any of Cunningham's rancour, and that they are the result of an obvious endeavour to be just. The present writer is none the less convinced that Sir Walter is completely mistaken in the opinion he has formed of Reynolds's personality.

Sir Walter contends that the key to Reynolds's character is alone to be found in the verses of Goldsmith, Dean Barnard, and Mrs. Thrale, lines which he prints at the beginning of his volume, and takes as the text of his dissertation on that character. "In the face of such portraits as those drawn by Goldsmith, Dean Barnard, and Mrs. Thrale," he writes, "it is futile to build up a conception irreconcilable with theirs in deductions which may or may not be true."

We all know the features of those portraits. To Goldsmith Reynolds was "gentle, complying, and bland," his manners were calculated "to improve the hearts" of his companions, and he left "no wiser or better behind" him. Reynolds appeared to Barnard as the man of "unclouded brow" and the "smile serene," who turned a deaf ear to insult, and whose "temper mild" and "genius fine" the Dean himself hoped to acquire by "constant meditation." Mrs. Thrale was of opinion that "all good and no harm" should be recorded of Sir Joshua, but that his heart was "too frigid."

The features of these portraits seem to suffer distortion at the hands of Sir Walter. "The painter," says he, "was a wary man with a just mind, and no passions to

speak of" . . . "he was zealous for nothing"; "a righteous indignation was not among his emotions." "To me it appears indisputable that Sir Joshua's heart was very hard." He was incapable of feeling "that rare and unnecessary virtue, gratitude," and so on.

Who believes that Sir Walter has found these qualities in those playful verses in which he supposes Reynolds's true character to be preserved? Mrs. Thrale's "frigid heart" becomes "very hard" in his estimate, but he has deliberately rejected his own advice, and, like the rest of us, has sought for details of Reynolds's true personality elsewhere. He has, indeed, "built up a conception irreconcilable with the verses," and "by deductions which may or may not be true," in the very face of his own injunction.

His worst charge is that of the very hard heart. But was it really hard? Reynolds certainly was not for ever exposing his feelings for the admiration and pity of his friends, but the capacity for restraining the emotions is not usually accepted as an incapacity for possessing them. Do Reynolds's relations with Goldsmith, for whom, as Sir Walter truly says, he displayed a regard which was almost paternal, or with Johnson, or his own family, or do even his relations with his fellow-painters, show a hard heart? Here is a letter which Johnson wrote to the painter in June of 1781, which seems to have a bearing on the point—

"DEAR SIR,

"It was not before yesterday that I received your splendid benefaction. To a hand so liberal in distributing, I hope no one will ever envy the power of acquiring.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your most obliged and humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

We do not wish to make too much of the charities of an affluent man, but such incidents as this seem of value in determining the hardness of a man's heart; we wonder, too, whether Sir Walter Armstrong has the same views as Cunningham as to Reynolds's motive for giving Burke £4000?

Some recorded dealings of Sir Joshua with the poorer members of his profession, too, do not seem very hard-hearted. Thus, when he was in Antwerp in 1781, he met a young man, the son of a tailor named De Gree, who displayed some talents as a painter. De Gree came to England, and at once secured work in Ireland under the auspices of Mr. Latouche. Reynolds received him with much kindness, Leslie tells us, and recommended him to pursue his profession in London, which, however, the youth declined, in the face of his previous engagement with Mr. Latouche. Reynolds thereupon presented him with fifty pounds, which the boy was enabled to send to his poor parents in Antwerp.

Northcote tells us also of a poor artist whom he does not name, who was in fear of arrest for want of forty pounds. Sir Joshua heard of his trouble, called upon him in his lodgings, and pressed a banknote for a hundred pounds in his palm as he bid him good day.

Another story still, which, however, does not relate to a painter, is told by Leslie. A daughter of the schoolmistress who had set up in his father's old schoolhouse at Plympton, heard of the fame of the painter and his connection with the place, and wrote to tell him that she had no dress in which to appear at a local dancing party, and of her trouble in consequence, which was no doubt very genuine. Reynolds, apparently, was delighted to play the good fairy to this poor Cinderella. He sent anonymously by the carrier a box containing silks sufficient for two dresses, by which she was enabled to

appear at the merrymaking. We wonder if Sir Walter Armstrong believes these stories, and if so, whether he does not think that they may be fairly weighed with Mrs. Thrale's flighty verses in estimating the quality of Reynolds's heart?

Sir Walter is, if possible, less convincing, and is certainly no more charitable in considering Sir Joshua's relations with his own family. Reynolds's intercourse with his sisters, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Palmer, is thus described. "With his married sisters he had business relations which led to an occasional exchange of ideas." Could Cunningham himself have penned a more uncharitable description of Reynolds's relations with Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Johnson? We have seen that a generous portion of the scanty leisure he allowed himself was devoted to visiting those sisters in Devonshire, and that those visits resulted in the practical adoption of two of Mrs. Palmer's daughters. That adoption again led to the receipt of a large legacy by one of those young ladies, of a large fortune by the other, and to the settlement by advantageous marriages of both. If those were business relations which existed between Reynolds and his family, it is not difficult to discover upon which side the balance of profit lay. Reynolds took his nieces from the obscurity of a provincial village into the midst of the best society of his day, found husbands for them, and left one ten thousand pounds and the other a hundred thousand, while they were still young women. In return for those benefits he had their society during his later years, their superintendence of his household, and, it cannot be doubted their love and affection also.

Sir Walter is very ready with a sneer at Reynolds's conduct on the occasion of Offy's marriage. "Offy," he says, "his favourite Offy, was allowed to marry an approved suitor without even a letter of good-will, until

Burke forced it from him." But Sir Walter takes no care to quote one of the few letters of the undemonstrative Reynolds, which shows very plainly what his feelings towards that young lady were. We have already quoted that letter, but a paragraph from it may be repeated here.

"I never was a great friend of the efficacy of precept, nor a great professor of love and affection, and therefore I never told you how much I loved you for fear you should grow saucy upon it."

These words seem eloquent of the real relations between Reynolds and his niece, and here is the letter which Reynolds wrote on the occasion of her marriage, and which Sir Walter Armstrong declares was "forced" from him by Burke.

"MY DEAR OFFY,

"I intended to have answered your letter immediately, and to have wrote at the same time to Mr. Gwatkin, but was prevented, and have been prevented every evening since. However, I proposed doing so this evening, and disengaged myself from Mrs. Elliot's (where Polly is gone) on purpose. But this moment Mr. Edmund Burke has called upon me, and proposes a party, but desires I would write while he waits at my elbow, for that he will add something himself. You must suppose, therefore, that I have wished and expressed everything that affection to you and friendship to Mr. Gwatkin would dictate.

"That you may be as happy as both deserve is my wish, and you will be the happiest couple in England. So God bless you! I will leave the rest to Mr. Burke.

"Your most affectionate uncle,

"J. REYNOLDS.

"January 30, 1781."

This letter explains the circumstances in which it was written, and we would ask any impartial reader whether to describe that letter as being "forced" from Reynolds by Burke is a fair statement of its origin, and whether Sir Walter Armstrong's treatment of the relations between Reynolds and his family entitles him to be considered as a competent judge of the painter's character.

It seems hardly necessary to follow the catalogue of defects which Sir Walter Armstrong discovers in Reynolds much further. It is noteworthy, however, that the remark made by the painter to Miss Cotterell which attracted Johnson, and led directly to the intimacy of the two men, convinces Sir Walter of the painter's incapability of feeling gratitude. Reynolds, as a fact, was never called upon for gratitude after the early days of his studentship. He spent his life in bestowing favours and not in receiving them, and there is little opportunity of testing Sir Walter's gratuitous assumption. But this seems the less weighty in the light of his treatment of Reynolds's intercourse with his sisters and nieces, and also from some deductions he draws from what is known of the painter's relations with his friends. He finds disparagement in Johnson's well-known remark that Reynolds was the most invulnerable man he knew, with whom any one quarrelling would find it most difficult to abuse. Some of us have thought the doctor meant to say that any one attacking Reynolds was likely to find himself ill-provided with cause of offence, and that the painter's invulnerability lay in the general blamelessness of his character. To Sir Walter, it seems, the Doctor's saying "meant not only that it was difficult to find a weak point against which to plant a battery, but that also, when a breach was made, the painter's equanimity would form the effectual entrenchment." He quotes Johnson, too, to the effect that Reynolds was zealous for nothing. Well, if Reynolds were not zealous

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for the main interest of his life, his art, one knows not where to look for a zealous artist, and for the mainspring of that ambition which Sir Walter himself attributes to him, not, apparently, as a very creditable quality.

"Cold and ungenial Reynolds could not, of course, have seemed to his acquaintance," says Sir Walter. Surely it is the impressions of those acquaintances who knew him which should count before those of a critic who writes a century after the object of his criticisms is dead. Again, "the tradition has come down to us that with all his courtliness and suavity Reynolds never quite shook off the bourgeois manner of his youth, and that to the end of his life something clung about him to show that he had not been born in the rank in which he moved." In the present democratic age this seems no very great reproach, but one wonders where the tradition originated or where it survives, unless it be in the uncharitable pages of Cunningham, at whose feet, indeed, Sir Walter, in this matter of the painter's character, appears to have been content to sit.

Altogether it seems to the present writer that though a blameless life is impossible to any one, the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds approaches as near that counsel of perfection as any of which we know so much. He lived in an age which was nothing if not censorious, and among a company of men who were not backward in the ordering of the lives of their fellows. The same men dissected characters like that of Sir John Hawkins for the contempt and derision of the world, and if Sir Walter Armstrong has discovered Reynolds's real personality, he has unearthed also an amazing conspiracy to hide his shortcomings among the men with whom he lived. Reynolds, in their united report, is the calm, placable figure of Goldsmith's lines, the kindly moderator of the differences of others, the man who spoke no evil and would listen to

none, and was ever ready to find an excuse for others whose faults were more prominent than his own, and so more open to the chastisement which awaited them in the company in which he passed his leisure. Beauclerc forgot to sneer at Reynolds; Burke declared that he had hardly a fault or weakness that he did not convert into something that bordered on a virtue; the greatest accusation Johnson could bring against him was that he hated nobody; Walpole himself, the recording angel of the weaknesses of others, could only be captious about Reynolds when he had his bill to pay or when he differed with him about the value of some of the treasures at Strawberry Hill. No heroic figure, perhaps, is this presented by the common voice of his contemporaries, but surely an amiable one, rich in courtesy and in good nature and in the qualities which endear men to their fellows. So, indeed, Reynolds appears to us, as he appeared to those who knew him well, and as he has appeared to most of those who have followed him through his honourable career. It was one of these, Thackeray, who knew the times better than most, and was gifted beyond the ordinary with an insight into the hearts of men and women, who wrote—

"I declare, I think of all the polite men of that age, Joshua Reynolds was the finest gentleman."

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